[John Banim]

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STANDARD

NOVELS.

N° XXIX.

"No kind of literature is so generally attractive as Fiction. Pictures of life and manners, and Stories of adventure, are more eagerly received by the many than graver productions, however important these latter may be. APULEIUS is better remembered by his fable of Cupid and Psyche than by his abstruser Platonic writings; and the Decameron of BOCCACCIO has outlived the Latin treatises, and other learned works of that author."

THE SMUGGLER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"TALES BY THE O'HARA FAMILY," &c.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN):

BELL AND BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH;

CUMMING, DUBLIN; AND

GALIGNANI, PARIS.

1833.

LONDON:
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

T. Pickering, pinxt. W. Greatbatch, sculpt.

THE SMUGGLER.

I unconsciously echoed his ejaculations and he looked up into my face, with a conscience-stricken expression of eye, still kneeling over the dead body. The carpenter's voice sounded at our backs.

London, Published by Richard Bentley, 1833.

THE SMUGGLER.

A TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"TALES OF THE O'HARA FAMILY."

What! this for me? this sweet pity for me?

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY.
(SUCCESSOR TO H. COLBURN.)
CUMMING, DUBLIN.—BELL & BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH.
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PREFACE.

HAVING been requested by our publisher to say something in this edition of *The Smuggler* in "The Standard Novels," illustrative of the real grounds upon which it has been built, we comply, as follows: —

It owes its conception to a wish — an anxious wish — to indicate to those whom it most concerns, —

Firstly — The effects upon the minds, manners, and actions of the lower, and not a few of the middle orders of England, of laws, said to be "laws made by the rich against the poor:"

Secondly — The effects upon the minds, manners, and actions of the same classes, of a church, legally supported, in taxing their daily labour, at the perilous risk (perilous to an incalculable magnitude!) of leaving them to the edification of self-called, fanatical, uneducated, and presumptuous expounders of THE WORD OF GOD.

For this task, few needful preparations were, it is conscientiously hoped, left unattempted. Though not natives of England, the writers had lived long in it; and, to aid careful observation, believe that, with some trouble, they eventually discovered (no easy achievement) an "Open Sessima" to the partial confidence of at least the village, and rustic or isolated popula-

tion of the country; and upon this, though indeed but one of their endeavours after the truth, they chiefly leaned a hope of success in their undertaking.

Few of the events or incidents of *The Smuggler* are imaginary; and the same may be said, almost without an exception, of its characters. That we have it in our power to hint, that *all* its characters are *not* faithfully drawn from the life, is, however, a comfort; and, for the amusement of our kind readers, we beg leave to mention why.

After the tale had penetrated into the little village in which its first scenes are laid, a sanctified and tipsily-inclined butcher of the place ran, one day, after a stage-coach, on which was mounted an acquaintance of the writers', and, wroth at being pleased to suppose himself sketched by their pun, requested the person spoken of to inform us, "that some time or other, he would hunt us from Dan to Beersheba." As to people of higher degree, it is known in the town from which we date these lines, that an honourable individual, who chose to see himself reflected in an agreeable scamp of title in our poor Novel, talked even more awfully, though quite as harmlessly, as the field-preaching "Butcher Fell."

Now, surely we may be allowed to say, that there is considerable egotism in thus appropriating our little sketches.

THE O'HARA FAMILY.

Boulogne-sur-Mer, June 8. 1833.

P.S. We had almost omitted what, in conscience, we are bound to make public. The proprietress of

" The Anchor Inn" has requested us to mention, in a new edition of The Smuggler, that her house has been newly fitted up, with every view to comfort; and, particularly, that in her " great room" a traveller can now be snug and warm the coldest day in winter.

THE SMUGGLER.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

I.

To Richard Graves, Esq. Temple.

My dear Graves, Hastings, June, 182–.

It is as I anticipated, even from the vague information, if information I can call it, which I received, or rather gleaned, on the subject. They *are* here, on their way to some very retired, if possible, unknown village or hamlet on the coast, where my father may combine the prescribed advantages of sea-air with those of humble living. He had another hope, you know, to save, by his close-drawn system of economy, out of a purse already at its last ebb, as much as would keep his only son one year longer in chambers in the Temple, that so he might complete his terms, and be "called," I will not add "chosen." But that hope wavers. Dear Graves, I hate your present trade, and mine that was to be, more cordially than ever. My nature, my very interior, rises against it; and how can I help this, all abstract reasonings apart? To see a father and a sister, both dearly loved, reduced to penury by the monstrous system of law which it helps to make still more monstrous — cannot I stand excused on such grounds? After long and scrupulous investigation, you have yourself admitted to me the plain justice of the old man's claims; "the great blessing of the British Constitution," a jury, has admitted it — ay, three times over; the defendant did not for a long while encounter us on "merits," until that last trick of a perjured witness and a forged document; and yet, nought availed against the removals of verdicts, the staying of injunctions, the issues, the piecemeal hearings, the useless

corrections of unimportant formalities, and oh ! the tender, tender conscience which tremblingly reigns over the Court of Chancery, when a poor and honest man tries his right with a rich scoundrel. My father's last available guinea, the last of many thousands, and my father's life, that half of it at least, that vigorous, muscular half, which can be called life in reality, have passed away in the unmeaning, barbarous contention ; and until he can again light on a mine of gold, and again grow young, he must permit his more affluent enemy — robber — to hold the latest technical advantage he has gained — no ! bribed his way to — over him, with the pleasing consciousness into the bargain, on the part of the pauper plaintiff, that the means for his destruction have been drawn from his own unjustly-withheld property.

The Woolsack ! I was going to call it a great stone round the neck of justice, as, I believe, it has often been unfiguratively called ; but I will not — even let it remain what it is, a huge, sweltering mass, flung over the whole frame of the goddess, half smothering her and paralysing her in every limb. Graves, shall we live to see it unpacked and embowelled, or at least reduced to a rational size ? You are less apt to dream than I am, and yet you calmly say, Yes, now and then, while I unenergetically stamp my foot and say, No. Reason or necessity, you argue, must reach it some day, and soon, along with a good many other things ; but still I answer, so much, so wholly, in this nation of anomalies, do measures depend on men — I mean on one or two men, whoever they may happen to be for the time — that until some two such as Brougham and Peel coalesce to attack it, the great shame of British jurisprudence must continue pretty nearly what it is. But Brougham and Peel sit on opposite benches. Spirit of sense and philanthropy, and of prudence, inspire their very selves, and doom us not to wait for the eclipsing achievements of any two, or three, or four of their successors !

" A harangue, Mutford," you observe, with your quiet and somewhat (denied by you, dear Dick, in acts as well as words,) supercilious smile. No matter — let it pass ; and now I proceed to tell you, minutely, according to

agreement, what befell me since you bid me good-by at Charing Cross.

I had scarce descended from the top of the coach here at the inn where it stopped, when I saw my father and sister coming up the street. They had been walking on the parade. He stepped very feebly and leaned on Bessy's arm ; and though it was but some months since I had seen him before, he appeared sadly changed for the worse. This observation thrilled through me. Pitying his feebleness, I refrained from approaching him in the street, but stepped behind the open door of the inn-hall, to allow him and my sister to enter, as I thought. They passed the inn, however ; I followed them at a distance through meaner streets of the town, and traced them into another inn, of an appearance much more homely than that at which I was about to take up my temporary residence. Again I felt a shock, although I ought to have been prepared for the little event.

After they had entered the house, I walked into a little sanded side-parlour, and writing a line to Bessy, desired the unwashed man who personated a waiter to give it unperceived into her hands. The goose began to look virtuous and sceptical, and disinclined: "the young lady is my sister," I added, and so beguiled him of his rising hope of half-a-crown.

Bessy soon came down to me ; was greatly surprised and delighted; and after some necessary questions and answers, and many persuasions against my project, and in favour of a speedy return to the Temple without approaching my father, which my despotic words and manner over-ruled, went up stairs to prepare the invalid for seeing me. At her reappearance, with red eyes and a pale face, I accompanied her into his presence.

Under any possible circumstances—that is, possible between him and me—I am sure my father and I should always meet cordially. We did so on the present occasion. There was, however, a slight degree of bland self-possession in his eyes, words, and manner, after our salutations, which told me what I had to reckon on ; indeed, what I had anticipated. It did not much affect me—my mind

was made up; my purpose taken,—for good, I hoped: I did not fear that he could, or should, or ought to be very angry with me; and besides, strange and almost idle as the thought was, I liked to contemplate for a moment the perfect air of a gentleman, which such a mood never fails to impart to my father: an air somewhat ancient, to be sure, and cut by the present generation; it is, however, true old English of the best polish, and I shall not quarrel with the ingenious youth of my own day if they surpass it, after leaving it behind them.

Knowing his way, as, after many long years of living together, I ought to do—I did not apprehend an immediate "discussion," as he is used to call it. Dinner, a very frugal, fish one, was served, and I sat down to it, quite as naturally as if we had all been in the old eating-room in Yorkshire. I looked round the table for wine; there was none to be seen. I asked leave to order some. "No, Michael," he said, "not for me: it is an interdicted luxury in my present state of health; but I ought not to forget you, so, ring."

I mentioned my utter carelessness on the matter; and stated—and truly—how long, at a time, I had done without wine from choice, in chambers, in London.

"Well," he said, "*voluntary* temperance is a virtue, at least;" and I could perceive that he suppressed a long-drawn sigh: "but, by the way, Michael," and he paused; and I knew well what was to follow his usual "by the way," when, in fact, there had been no way, or a very narrow one, to the contemplated change of topic.

"Yes, dear father," I answered.

"It was not exactly my intention to have acquainted you with my present journey, for a time at least: pray, how did you come to hear of it?"

I told him how, as I have told you, Graves.

"And you have left London purposely to see Bessy and me, here?"

"Certainly so," I replied; though perhaps I had not been altogether forgetful of how available would be the ground I should tread, to the progress and finishing of my "Harold;" and I thought this a good stroke, in time,

because it hinted at what I was determined he should more fully know, before our conference ended.

My father shook his head, and observed, "I should have been better pleased, Michael, if you had remembered how available is the other ground which you have left, to your Vesey, junior."

"Dear father, no ground can now be any thing to me but that to which I am called by my duty," I resumed. He raised up his large and languid eyes, and fixed them upon me with an overpowering expression.

And—"Your duty, Michael!" he asked, "what do you mean by that?"

"'Tis a pedantic word," I said, "and I recall it; but let me supply another—my heart—if that one is not even more pedantic;" and here, Graves, my strength of countenance failing me, I was compelled to rest my forehead on one hand, while I extended the other to him. Bessy cried. I knew he looked at her, though I could not see him; ay, and looked at her reprehensively, too: however, he took my hand for a moment, pressed it, and when he spoke again, his voice was not as firm as it had been.

"Tell me, in a few words, what you have really got into your head, Michael."

"I will, father," I answered, assuming an even, though by no means light tone; and while speaking, I caught myself fiddling with a fork. "I have got into my head that, with a pittance scarce able to support you and Bessy here, for a year, you cannot afford, and I ought not to accept, another year's allowance for my chambers and my dinners in the Temple; that, on the contrary, I ought to exert myself to support *myself* at least, if my efforts serve no better end; and that I can make the trial to more advantage, — that is, more economically — by your side, wherever you are, sharing the same roof with you, than I could, living expensively and separately away from you, in London."

"Your impulses are natural, Michael; I need not flatter you by calling them any thing else," he said, looking towards the fire; "that is not the point, however."

"It is, it is! let me so far interrupt you," I urged warmly; "it *is* the point. If I act naturally *upon the present occasion*, I do not, cannot act badly; but a contrary mode of action would not be natural, therefore might, would be bad; and *now*, how will you counsel me?"

"Well *pleaded* for an unfledged barrister," he said, faintly smiling; but his speeches grew deeply serious as he continued. "Listen to me, Michael, attentively; weigh my reasons; I can only reason with you; you are of the years of manhood, and your own master; perhaps at any time I should not care to play the despot. But listen. By your scheme, you incontestably give up a good — the attaining an honourable and, with industry, a — we must use the word — a money-making profession, within a year."

"Yes, father; but one that does not insure money to a practitioner within the next year, or the next, or the next, no matter how intense may be his industry. Besides, it is not now proposed to abandon it altogether; and you know I am at liberty to resume my steps towards it, even after pausing and turning aside on the road."

"I grant you the last point, Michael. Perhaps much of that which went before it. There is certainly a chance that for many years the most industrious young barrister may not get into practice; still there is a chance that he may. And here our question narrows itself, and is easily disposed of. Will you stand as good a chance of making money during the year, or the years, which you propose spending away from your law-studies, as you would walking Westminster Hall, with your wig on your head, this day twelve months, and afterwards?"

"Unquestionably," said I.

"Prove that," said my father.

"Why, dear father, I have submitted some of the proof already."

"How? when? Your Harold?"

"Yes, my Harold; and attempts of the same kind."

"Ah!" was his only remark, as he drew his chair nearer to the fire.

"But you do not yet know the real chances in my favour," I resumed, now inspired, I suppose, by a com-

bination of parental as well as of filial feelings; the one towards my dramatic brat, the other for my natural father.

"Well, well: reckon them for me, Michael."

"First, the stage is at present very much in want of a genuine English tragedy."

"Granted," said he, ingenuously.

"Next, good judges give me the greatest encouragement to finish Harold."

"Good judges? Who?"

"Dick Graves, for one."

"Michael, you always think to stop my mouth, blind my eyes, and awe my reason with Dick Graves. But go on. I believe you have touched my heart with him. Go on. I do, however, admit that he may — ought to be one, at least, of your good judges. Though I have never seen him, you have favoured me now and then with portions of his letters at second-hand; and letters hint a good deal of a man. He loves you, I suppose, and he has a cool and a strong judgment, I am sure, to say nothing of a perfected education. Go on."

"To save your objections, possibly, to others whom you do not know, dear father, I will step with you at once into the manager's room, at one of the great theatres."

"And Harold has actually been there?"

"He has, even in his present dishabille."

"And what did the manager say?"

"That he had no doubt of being able to accept my tragedy when it should be completed."

"Indeed?" asked my father musingly.

"And have it acted, Michael?" demanded Bessy, her large humid black eyes and her brunette cheeks glowing at the prospect of the literary fame of the family.

"To be sure, my dear," I answered; "acting a play is only a step of course after it has once been accepted."

"And, Michael," demanded my father, after his dry pause, "what may one expect to gain by a tolerably successful tragedy?"

"For a really successful one, about five hundred pounds," I replied.

" I did not ask you concerning a really successful one, Michael."

" Well, then, for a tolerably successful one, perhaps half the money."

" And how much time has Harold cost you ?"

" Say, six months, dear father, off and on ; but I could do my best at a tragedy in less time, supposing literature my sole pursuit, for an interval ; besides writing other things for the periodicals and annuals."

" Where is ' Harold ' at present, Michael ? Have you brought him to Hastings with you ?"

" Here he is," I answered, pulling the manuscript out of my pocket.

" Well taken care of, I see. Will you read me a line or two of him ?"

" With pleasure, dear father, my best scene ; or, perhaps, as the evening is early, and ——"

" No ; not a whole scene, Michael : I have not sufficient dramatic skill to judge of the fitness of the tragedy for the stage in its arrangement ; but I think I am competent to form an opinion of its claims to poetry ; so read to me a single speech, as much detached from what the people are doing as is possible ; meantime, let it please yourself."

Accordingly, somewhat chilled by my father's apathy, I selected in an instant the speech you have approved, dear Graves : —

> " Onward I must ! but how, or where, or wherefore,
> Is more than mystery : no loves shall hallow
> The bitter hardships of a dreary day;
> —————— and when I wake
> To wander in the cold wild blasts of morn,
> Glory will bend no radiant smile upon me,
> To sun the sleeping darkness of my soul. —
> But I must wander still, without a wish
> To win me happiness — my goal ungain'd,
> Because unknown — the chances yet to come
> Unreckon'd, and all future hope shut up,
> Like infancy, unchristen'd, in the grave ! "

" Beautiful !" cried Bessy, shedding some tears of sisterly delight, mostly, I believe, because she had been listening to

a speech out of a tragedy written by me. My father only nodded his head at the end of each line, as if merely to make sure of the prosody; and some moments elapsed before he asked,—

"And so, Michael, you are determined on your new scheme?"

"I promise you this, dear father," said I, anxious to gain my point rapidly and graciously, "if literature yield me nothing the first year, I will have done with it for ever, and in all things do as you advise and direct me, afterwards. Meantime, do not refuse me the opportunity of taking my chance for fame, and for its results, so necessary, and so immediately necessary to my prospects."

"More so to Bessy's and mine, Michael," he interrupted: "but I understand you, my dear boy. I suppose you must have your way; though I wish I could have kept our removal from Yorkshire a secret from you till the year was out, Michael. I suspected something of this kind at your hands. Have you given up your chambers?"

"No; but Dick Graves promises me a tenant for them, at a profit rent, in consideration of some articles of furniture."

"Dick Graves over again. And you will be able to put up with much humbler lodgings somewhere or other — I do not know where yet — but in great retirement — will you, Michael? with Bessy and me?"

He looked at me, his eyes moist, and I could only stammer out some very unintelligible words, half of remonstrance for his question, half of agreeance.

"Then come with us, in God's name, Michael," he added; now taking my hand of his own accord, as he passed an arm round Bessy. And so, dear Graves, my first point is won, though you thought it would not be, and I bid you adieu, in a hurry, for the present.

MICHAEL MUTFORD.

II.

To Michael Mutford, Esq. Hastings.

My dear Mutford,

In the disengaged half hour before the breakfast-cloth is taken away, I write a hasty answer to your last. I am pleased to hear that you have carried your first point, under all the circumstances. It would be irrational to argue, that where the necessity was so strong, you were not called upon to make the sacrifice. You know well I am no advocate for a blind self-devotion or abasement of the child to the father. The slavish homage that some parents exact from their offspring, is treason against the law of nature: yet I am not sure that the selfish indifference of some children, too, to the immediate causers of their being, the anxious fosterers of their infantine weakness and childish wants, is not quite as much against that law. True, as I have often conceded to "independent" youths of my acquaintance, we owe our fathers no thanks merely for our existence: no, nor for bringing us up, giving us meat, drink, clothing, a fire to warm us in winter, a bed to sleep on; the stipendiary sovereign of Bow Street or of Marlborough Street would have compelled our parents to have so far obliged us. He could not, however, have forced them to have done more: but *have* they not done more? And for that more are we not bound, in the name of nature — of our own nature — of man's nature — of common generosity — to hold ourselves prepared to make an acknowledgment some time or other?

This is one of the very coldest ways of putting the question. But even so coldly and so cautiously I have been constrained to shape it, while arguing with what I regret to call a prevalent doctrine of the lately risen and the rising generation, else I should not, or would not have been understood. Meagre as are the premises, however, they fully warrant me, dear Mutford, in sanctioning, as a friend, your temporary abandonment of good prospects for the sake of trying to cheer, and perhaps better your father's present situation: the necessity, I must repeat, is strong. At the same time allow me to say, that I still think you had an

alternative in a sincere proffer of friendly assistance: nor can I understand your rooted objection to allow a friend to show he is one, in certainly the least important manifestation of a pure and high feeling. My father happens not to have been plundered of his property by a scoundrel. I happen myself to have the start of you upon the road of professional practice: from these two reasons I am, with my few wants and fully occupied time, superfluously rich; and why, therefore, could not I, as well as you, or any one for you, arrange about your chambers, and your other little matters, for a year or so? But I write these plain words of common sense in vain: at least, I fear I do. Our repeated and futile conversations on the subject give me few present hopes. If, however, you should fortunately feel yourself at last more open to conviction — I will say, to the clear-sightedness of manly friendship — come back to town, and secure your father's and your sister's comforts, and your own professional peace, within a few months.

I forgive your exaggerated declamation against us, poor barristers. You have cause to rail at one of our courts, at least; and, by association, at ourselves. But, only by association. We had no hand in framing the constitution of any court in which we practise. As to the rest — our helping to make the monster "more monstrous," *that* we need not do. Not one of us. Neither he who has been called, nor he who is to be. If some among us do so, others of us cannot help them. But we can do better. We can resolve, and practically arrange not to imitate them. Nay, we can do better and better still. We can contrive, upon all fitting occasions — we, the initiated familiars of the monster, the keepers of the beast — to interpose between him and his humour on the gaping crowd who will pay their pence to come and see the show.

Are you not answered? — Own that you are. And so, no more angry abuse of your future trade. For, a barrister you must be, Mutford. You have many of the chief qualifications for success as one; and for such a one as will leave your death-bed conscience free of the sins you suppose us all compelled to: ay, and for such a one as — (you surly and not-to-be complimented person) — will aid to

rescue us from that very charge. To be sure, you are (at present) much of an enthusiast, and too much (notwithstanding "Harold," to whom all the success he really merits) of a rhimester; furthermore, I have now and then thought there was about you or in you, of late, a something or other which——. Excuse the sudden break. The last favoured client of my father's introduction, Lord P——, (for whom, because he is a friend, I am supposed to be able to think clearer, and advise better than I could do for a stranger!) has come in, with some new light on his very blank case, and he waits till I shall have finished this, to uncloud himself, and shower radiance upon obscurity. So, farewell, after I complete the interrupted sentence. "About you, or in you, something or other which," — "which"—and here I stop again of my own accord. In short, Mutford, do, in your next, what I often asked you to do for me. Sit down before a good mirror — *your past* — and sketch a front face of yourself. Let the costume and accompaniments be *your present*. I do not want to know you: otherwise could we have got up between us a good copy of David and Jonathan, or any two such names, divine or profane; or, recollecting Macpherson, Gothic? no; I do not want to know you; but I *do* want to know if I do.— "Now, Lord P——." RICHARD GRAVES.

On the reverse, suppose an outline, in profile, *your future* — truly, thoughtfully, from the heart, as you see, or think you see it; and, my dear Mutford, as you feel I have a right, yea a right, to contemplate it along with you. Candidly, Michael, what is your master passion? your ungrasped idol of worship? Love, worldly success (in place or fame), or fortune? Do, I pray you, begin the sketches.

R. G.

III.

To Richard Graves, Esq.

Fudge, dear Dick! who is sentimental now, and mouthy, and fanciful, and solemnly nonsensical? Who talks tropes, and long sentences, now? What have you been dreaming of about me? Yes, I suppose you have

noticed something exceedingly mysterious whenever I had my periodical fit of toothache, or upon some such memorable occasion. But, man, I am no model for a reserved and moody hero; I, as well as you, live in too old a world for that. My past, my present, and my future! why, in common sense's name, what does any youth of three-and-twenty live for, but to laugh at his past, enjoy and make the best of his present, and always dream of being rich, if nothing else, in his future? Dick, you have hitherto been fining me, sixpence at a time, for my absurdity; pay *your* fine of nine-pence for this letter, on account of your own. MICHAEL MUTFORD.

IV.

To Michael Mutford, Esq.

I am going to be more absurd, Michael, if such is your word; or more sentimental, or mouthy, or long-sentenced. I ask you on the faith and value of our friendship for each other, on your regard for truth, and in the name of your father, your sister, and your God, to answer my last letter seriously. RICHARD GRAVES.

V.

To Richard Graves, Esq.

Graves, you have terribly shaken me; even my body trembles along with my spirit, and 'tis literally true that I cannot firmly guide the pen with which I write to you. Yet I snatch it up; — in what impulse? — a mixed one, I believe, — a great yearning to answer the call of your great friendship mingles with the natural thirst for unloading a "stuffed bosom." At any rate you *shall* be answered. You, the only second human being, and now the only *one* — always excepting my father and my sister — who have loved me, and let me love. And have I dealt ungenerously with you by hiding hitherto the story I am about to tell? No, I hope not. My character I never hid, never vamped up, never imposed upon you. My sorrows only I did; by and by you may say my crimes also, and so stand upon a ground for reproach. But we shall see

whether I have not been more sinned against than sinning. God sees and judges the question already.

Yes, Graves, I sit down to my mirror. In it I see a youth of twenty (I am not yet twenty-three), his features open and spirited, though scarce comely; hope and truth in his eye, smiles on his lips; slight and short in stature, but upright, agile-limbed, and every muscle stamped with the power of bounding motion. Not yet, oh, not yet, have his lids drooped, and his mouth curved downward, and his cheeks flattened and faded almost into ugliness; not yet have his shoulders stooped, nor yet has his chest rounded, not yet have his limbs looked listless. Let a brief narrative enable you to trace the change that has come over him.

You know that when home in Yorkshire from college to see my father, I was a professed walker. You know that I often broke the bounds even of our great county, and rambled over Northumberland, sometimes using the pencil, sometimes the pen. There, at twenty, in a mountain-hut, I saw the being foredoomed to be my fate — my life's atmosphere, climate, if not the meter-out of the limit, the very act of life itself. She was very young. Often and often I visited her, till passion became downright infatuation. You smile, Graves, in your quiet, equal way, at the notion of having so quickly learned the common-place cause of my — my whatever it is which you say you have noticed in me. I fell in love, you predicate, at twenty, with a little hill-goddess, and my father would not hear of the matter, and so I am pursued, or I am pleased to fancy myself pursued, by a gentle melancholy. Not quite thus, however, dear Graves; not quite thus. She is dead. Dead, and gone from me in her first youth; while my bones, my very bones thrill to the thought of hers rotting in her grave; while my heart swells with love to the foul earth that once was her heart. That is something not so common-place. Dead! Dead, more than two years. Next — not in her grave alone. A drop of my blood, frozen before its time — frozen, indeed, almost ere it flowed, — a crumble of the clod which makes my mortal identity, helped to fill that grave with her. I saw them,

coarse and vulgar, and office-hardened, and tyrant savages, as they were — I saw them lay the little creature on her bosom, and fold her arms over it, before both were hurried from my sight for ever. Hurried I do not know whither. They have left me without a guide or clue to the spot in which they flung her and it. Perhaps they had their own reasons for their brutal silence. Perhaps, at a nod and a bribe from some agent of some studious man, mother earth has been rifled of her children. But I wander and tire you. To complete this long sentence. Dead — how dead? Graves, that, *that* question involves the least common-place, though, I fear, not the least every-day, answer of all. You do not understand my distinction between the two words common-place and every-day. I will explain to you as well as I can.

I need not say that she — (*she* — the pronoun is enough, let her name share her grave, her nameless grave, ay, and the mysterious sleep of the nameless little infant, there massed with her dust long ago,) — I need not say that her lot in life was humble, very humble; but her natural capacity, her organisation of mind was of a high order, and I resolved within myself to educate her, and when she should have become intelligent and a woman (for as yet I could scarce call her more than child), I hoped to win my father's consent to our union. No, Graves, as I am a man, as I hope to see her again and confront her with a brow of truth, never for one instant did I indulge a bad and cowardly thought towards that unhappy young creature — never. But, on the contrary, I formed my plan of becoming her tutor, and acted upon it with a glowing, a smiling pureness and joy of heart which was worthy of a man; ay, and my delicious task proceeded as if under a blessing, and a year passed over us, and my lips had scarce disturbed the first bloom on hers. Then, one mad, one accursed instant, unforeseen, undreamt of, nay, unplanned the instant before, and I destroyed her.

That my crime would be followed by its own evidence I could not know for many months. Having fled from her in wild remorse, a term at college and a sojourn with my father kept us some time separated. When I saw her again,

her appearance was horror to my eyes; but I resolved to stay by her side till she should be a mother. My father might conjecture what he liked about my absence; ay, and feel what he liked, deeply as I loved him — this I resolved. Oh, that I had now, now at least, made him my confidant!

Let me be brief, very brief, as I promised you I would be. I had been long expected in the Northumberland cottage by more than one or two persons. At the first symptoms of her shame, the majesty of parish law aroused itself against her; its administrators called on her to divulge the name of the father of her coming child, and, more in simplicity than any other feeling, she gave that by which I had announced myself the first evening I crossed her father's threshold, and had since borne in the neighbourhood — I need not add that it was not my real name. Well, I came again to see her, and to my consternation, — for I had not considered the subject, — I was scarce seated at her side when I received a summons to appear before a magistrate the next morning. My blood shrank from a public investigation: I trembled at the thought of its reaching the ears of my sick and impoverished and honoured father. I hurried out into the fields to think, and, if possible, arrange a compromise with the offended guardians of population. There was enough money in my pocket to appease their utmost wrath — (you know there was, Graves, for, though now you kindly upbraid me with not calling on you, it was of you I borrowed it) — I resolved to walk down to the neighbouring village and see what I could do amongst them.

I took a very lonely path — the night fell upon me — I was attacked by three strange men, knocked down, cruelly beaten, and robbed of every shilling I possessed. These fellows were doubtless members of a gang of petty thieves, who infested the town of —— and its vicinity; and so my treaty with the parish rulers was at an end, and I crawled back to the cottage, scarce able to crawl, and wholly despairing at heart.

I was too ill to obey the summons next morning; in fact, I slept, after a sleepless and painful night, at the

hour prescribed for my attendance on the awful magistrate. Men came to seek me, and shook me rudely, where I lay undressed upon a straw pallet, *she* watching and crying over me. I told them my situation, and prayed them to let me rest till I could receive money in a letter to replace that which I had lost. They scouted my proposal, swearing out their disbelief of the story of my having been robbed, calling me an impostor and no better than a rogue myself, and commanding me to get up and go with them; doubtless, my very humble pedestrian dress of fustian, and my bruised features and the soil on my person, caught from the damp earth where the thieves had flung me down, gained me few good opinions in the minds of my visiters.

Their base insults ought not to have affected me; but in my weak and feverish state they did, and I resented them in intemperate language. Little mercy was now shown to me; in a few moments I was dragged from my straw to the magistrate, raving and struggling, with her shrieks in my ears. Placed before the temporary arbiter of my fate, my indignation and my fever remained unabated, and I continued to play the fool. He was, perhaps, a person of some feeling, and under his own roof might have shown me some—that is, in any room of his house excepting only his magisterial audience room. But when I refused to answer upon oath to the name I bore in Northumberland; in fact, refused to give any name, I found at his hands as little charity as I had found at those of his meanest creatures; perhaps my personal appearance again added to the unfavourable impressions against me, as much as did my candid and vehement admissions of being for the time penniless. It is quite true, Graves, that in less than half an hour, I found myself in the parish workhouse, doomed to be a prisoner until I could satisfy the authorities, in a specified sum, for the—the lying-in of my victim, and the future maintenance of her child.

The window of my prison-chamber overlooked the entrance into the house of misery. In about half an hour after I was left alone, I heard shrieks and groans without, and saw *her* borne towards the door by the same man who had dragged me before the magistrate. She entered under

one roof with me, and her moans and cries became more audible. I grew frantic; I thumped at the door of the small apartment, stamped on the floor, and roared for some one to come to me. In his own good time my gaoler appeared: to my rapid and furious questions he sneeringly answered, that "the young woman, though her labour was beforehand, would soon make me a father;" and he withdrew, heedless of my entreaties, now offered in a feeble voice and with streaming eyes, to be admitted to see her, or allowed to stand at the door of her chamber and speak to her. Her cries subsided after I had listened to them for hours; or I could catch but the weakest moanings of exhaustion. Many people hurried through the house, and a little one-horse chaise stopped at the entrance door, and I knew it was the apothecary-surgeon I saw step out of it. In a few minutes she began to scream again, and at last I heard one great shriek, and then the stillness of the night in which I was at that moment sitting closed around me.

I will not trouble you with my feelings, drawn from my forebodings, while I was still left in that wretched room alone, and unnoticed, although a prisoner. It might be about ten o'clock at night when I was again visited. And then I was made certain; and at last, yielding to the supplications, and to the rage, by turns, of almost madness, they allowed me to pass into her chamber.

An old woman accompanied me to the door; there gave me a rushlight, for, previously, the apartment had been in utter darkness, and left me to enter alone. I shut the creaking door gently, as if I could have disturbed any one, raised the meagre light above my head, and looked around. I saw a bed, decently disposed, but nothing else, till I stole on tiptoe to its side, and then I saw the two corpses. Again there is no use in alluding to what I suffered. I will tell you, Graves, only some peculiar portions of my solitary reflections that night, sitting by that bed.

The stillborn infant, my infant, and mine at twenty years of age, lay on my knees, while one of its mother's hands was clasped in one of its father's. I had drawn a deal table close to me, and put the rushlight upon it, so that all the rays the wretched taper could lend fell upon

the baby's face. Hours had passed. I had no more tears to shed ; or, more truly, they could not come : the heavy pain of unexhausted anguish stuck in my breast and throat ; and thus I gazed and gazed upon my child, until — it was a strange and some may think an unfeeling fancy — until — at last expressing a long though fitful reverie — I demanded of myself — why should I mourn for this little creature ? Let me mourn for the dead alone, — its mother, here at my side, — but not for it, the unborn, ay, unborn, although delivered of the womb — the unbreathed, the little spirit which has never been of this world, and hardly ever abstracted from a higher one. And then, Graves, I felt deep awe fall upon me, arresting for a time even my anguish, — deep awe, wonder, uncertainty, mystery. No, it was not death, though so like it. Death comes when life goes ; life lived in this life. But the beauteous little out-turned lips I looked on had never moved or fluttered with an earthly breath : the little silken eyelids had never been upraised to admit a ray of our sun's light ; the little unseen, unknown eyes they curtained had never beheld an earthly object — the little ears heard an earthly sound — the little limbs felt an earthly touch. I held not, upon my knees, the mortal relics of a human being. And what held I, then ? The machine prepared for the reception, and impulses, and powers of that being ; or, half prepared, and now re-ordained never, in this life at least, never to be used, never acted upon. Or, in my passing view, did I gaze on any thing more real, with regard to breathing existence, than might be a sculptor's marble copy of those limbs and features ? Yes ! and I trembled. Yes ! for that *would* be a copy. And a copy of *what master hand !* and *marble* — and here on my knee was *another material !* And I should not think of surface merely, but of the wondrous structure, through its length and depth, through and through, of that material ! I felt my breath come short. The nerves and blood now thrilled along my head at the thought of touching, fresh from God's formation, a receptacle, a habitation for mortal life, which had not yet, and never could be, endowed with that life. To nurse the *corpse* of my infant, my *dead* infant,

would not have been strange, however agonising, — strange to me as a man, a living man; but to nurse this little — WHAT? Oh, again and again I said to myself, "Yes, there, upon the face, so still, so unused, and yet so wise and powerful" — (Graves, sageness and power *were* awfully conveyed by the baby's features) — "there is the expression of flesh and blood, and bone and muscle, prepared for the action upon them of a spirit of good and greatness, but of flesh and blood, and bone and muscle, which yet have not received that action!"

Make some excuses, dear Graves, as well for this ramble itself as for its extravagances, incoherences, and inconsequential assumptions, and attribute all its errors rather to my shaken, and, perhaps, raving frame of mind at the moment, than to the slightest wish, then or now, of disturbing a single dogma, and many axioms, revealed and scientific. To continue; or, I should say, conclude.

And yet, how little more have I to add. The village carpenter, rudely pushing into the room with a deal coffin on his shoulders, aroused me, about midnight, from my reveries, such as they were. But before the man flung open the door, my rushlight had burned out; long before, I think; although still I sat by the bed, her hand in mine, and her infant on my lap. Finding himself in darkness, with the lifeless bodies, and perhaps hearing me stir, or breathe, or groan, he cast aside his load, and stumbled down stairs. Presently he returned with three or four others, men and women, and it was then I saw them lay the baby on its mother's bosom, and fold her arms round it. After that I just had enough presence of mind and strength left to write a line to you, dear Graves, requesting another loan of money, in my travelling name, and then they did what they liked with me, too.

I was told that many days had elapsed when I next had sense to address them. Many more were required to restore me to health, or rather to the power of moving. Your answer reached me in good time. I paid the sums they demanded of me, was free, and wandered home to my father and sister. My long absence, and my wretched appearance, gave both good grounds for anxious enquiries.

I truly stated that a fever had overtaken me in Northumberland; but more they did not learn, more they do not at present know.

Well, Graves, what has this made me? you have seen what, so far as regards my intercourse with the world and my friends; therefore I need not answer: but I suppose your "something or other" is now explained. But within? Desolate, Graves, desolate and fear-stricken; and yet evil and savage, too. How am I to make you understand? I apprehend 't is not in my power to do so; but I will give you one abiding thought, or sensation of my bosom, apart from its mere griefs. I never lay down my head to sleep at night, I never awake in the morning, without being conscious of a stifled but dense rage against man. Unceasingly I whisper when I am alone, "Neither she nor I had mercy at their hands!" And then this prepossession takes many shapes, at different times, some of them doubtless (though I had rather say perhaps) unjust and visionary. For example, I occasionally feel the dislike of the poor man against the rich, so common, as I have assured you, throughout England at present, although indulged by persons more absolutely inferior in society than I am. I believe that that one occurrence of tyranny towards me in Northumberland, where I was a stranger and penniless, inspires, and ever must inspire, the morbid feeling. Alas! Graves, a source of humiliation and degradation which I can never vent in revenge — pardon me the word, in self-assertion — has its influence upon me. And could the fretting and irritation of my previous life, on account of the disappointments and wrongs of my father, I may add, myself, have prepared me for being so affected by the outrage? Another impression has been indirectly made, which I cannot help permitting to sink deep. You know it, from our conversations together, and you have seen it in the form of a mere reasoning theory, though now I fear you will suspect it of personal prejudice; you may be wrong, however. It is not because a man's observation of public injustice is first aroused by his individual experience of it, that he is unfitted to become its denouncer on broad general grounds. Therefore, even

with the knowledge you now have of me, I again tell you that I consider our present state of parish laws a curse to our country, and before *you* again appear as their advocate, you must live more out of London. And it is not merely to the instance of their administration which affects myself, but to their whole influence and working that I now address my denouncement. I will not "utterly overpower you" by renewing here my doubts of the wisdom, the justice, or the mercy of other laws made by the rich against the poor; but I must say that I would not arm a gang of ruffian game-preservers against a gang of hungry or needy, or even ruffian (for the word involves its own argument) poachers, for all the pheasants that ever flew, and all the hares that ever ran* ; no, nor arm a cutter, nor a crew of men-of-war's men, against a smuggling lugger for the purpose of paying annually (if it were possible by such means) the whole thirty-something millions of interest of the national debt. And now, Graves, do not accuse me of a mistake; the revenue laws are not levelled against the poor exclusively: I know that very well; and yet, I denounce them, too, as deeply pernicious to the morals and the happiness of England.

But I *am* to be a barrister? of course all laws here spoken of, apart, when I put the question. We shall see, dear Graves. I must be any thing for money — any thing, at least, which will not lose me your friendship; and here comes in the last sketch you asked for — my future. But no, I cannot catch a feature. Every trait is so vague and visionary, that the very recollection (if nothing else) of my old objection to painters trying to *define* the *indefinable* (ghost, dreams, and all ideal creatures, for instance,) incapacitates me; or, Graves, the object is so fearful, as well as so shapeless, that my hand trembles too much for a single touch.

"My master-passion?" Graves, I do believe I have none. "Love?" That is answered. Till I cease to dream every night of *her* and of her baby, as I saw them,

* For none of the peculiarly-constituted opinions of Mutford do his faithful editors deem themselves accountable.

and as I have faintly imaged them to you, the answer must hold good. "Place, fame, fortune?" No. I have said, indeed, that I wish (to use my poor father's words) to make money. But I wish it not for itself, or for *myself*. "Fame?" As money's hand-maid. No chord in my breast throbs to the thought of newspaper paragraphs, and invitations to the tables or the evening parties of collectors of rare beasts. "Place?" Graves, a chord now *does* answer! But it *has* been a broken chord, *is* but newly knotted together, and it answers in a jar! yes, Graves, "Place!" For whom? again, not for myself; or if so, not that I may smile in it, and be happy, and at rest. No, Graves! but that from it, I may . . . . . .

Folly, folly.

We leave this town to-morrow, and I am glad of it. My walks out by the sea with my father and Bessy, or alone, do me no good. The brilliant crowd that begin to gather in so fashionable a "watering-place" seem to me to look hard, and unfeelingly, and insolently, upon us as we pass them, upon our humbled brows and air, and—poor attire. "Worse and worse," you exclaim,—"morbid to absurdity." Well, well, I can at least make you believe that you are valued and loved by

Your affectionate friend,

MICHAEL MUTFORD.

Lest my father's uncertain health should delay our intended journey, direct your next, if you write soon, to the post-office here. I will give them instructions to forward it, in case of need.

VI.

To Michael Mutford, Esq.

Your hand, my dear fellow, and let me shake it cordially (or as cordially as we Britons are said to do), and thank you for your confidence. I am now sure that I can make a friend.

You have suffered, indeed, dear Mutford, terribly, pitiably, for your years; but I will avoid this topic at present, if not for ever. I cannot hope to say any thing to

soothe you upon a recollection so poignant; you do not expect that I can or ought. Once more, thank you heartily, that's all.

But I may venture to assure you that time will bring you great if not primitive peace of heart and clearness of mind, much as the one continues to be wrung, and the other, — excuse me, — clouded. If I was not convinced of this, I should indeed mourn for you, and deeply as for one — I mean as for an esteemed friend — half-lost to me for ever. For, indeed, Mutford, you *do* give way at present to impressions sufficient to destroy you. Morbid, — ay, morbid, — and you see it yourself; your own nature feels and resists already the ungenerous pressure which would bear it down. I am very glad you did not finish that sentence about "place." Not that I do not finish it for you; not that I am not able to comprehend the loose though angry and dark views in which your temporary affliction would tempt you to aspire to power. But, once again, dear Michael, believe me, you will change. I long to see you grasp your thunder-bolts, only that I may admire how peacefully you will allow them to repose at your feet. We have not all wronged you, nor warped laws already enough warped, nor abused a little day of local power to tyrannise over you and crush you. And even for our sakes, who have not done these things, you will forgive the few who have. Nay, Michael, you will forgive in spite of you. You are constructed more for loving than for hating; mind, I do not mean to say you *hate* — that is, at present; though I *do* mean, that if you *could* cherish (which you cannot) your prepossessions for some years more, ay, and in the softening and warming sunshine of success, then you *would* hate.

As to my feelings at learning from yourself this hidden, ay, "master-passion," though you deny it, they were very distressing, Mutford, at first; more distressing, if possible, than the melancholy events which caused it. I shut my eyes over your letter, and shuddered, not at you, but for you. But that passed away when I thought of you — of your mind and heart; and my next transition was to surprise that such a heap of bitterness could have so long lain

covered from my eye by your alternate good-humour and pleasantry; I admit, indeed, that the latter partook of caustic, still it was what I call it. And my surprise heightened when I assured myself that this had happened without an effort on your part to make a show of fallacious characteristics to your friend. You are a new leaf to me in my puzzle-book of human nature, Michael.

One part of your letter I like, or, at any rate, a part of the part. Whether or no you are quite right regarding the state of the laws you speak of, your view interests me, as it must every body; and as you are going to live in the country again, ay, and at the coast too, it is evident that you must be well situated for acquiring the best argument on the subject, one way or another — experience. And now do me a kindness. A journal, a regular journal is a very old-fashioned thing, yet if you would write something of the kind for me, during your residence out of London, and send it in parts up to town, each part in the shape of a parcel by the stage, I would feel gratified. Very far am I from wishing to rob "Harold" of a single half hour; but I suspect you will have a little time every day to spare from him. In this manner we can be almost together still; and I own that I expect improvement and amusement from your sketches, almost to an extent equal to the pleasure it must give me to hear constantly from you and about you. You will use your eyes, I know; make as many road-side and cottage friends as you can; oversee the overseer, watch the beadle, and — difficult as is the task — tithe the parson for me; and I can tell you, without much flattery, that you have a knack of making others comprehend what you see or hear, whether you use the tongue or the pen. Of course I may depend on having one or two of your clients, the poachers; and, if it is possible, capture me a real smuggler; none of your timid land-receivers, but a fine romantic vagabond of the waters, who absolutely chops about the Channel in his own lugger, and runs in his goods of a dark night upon a perilous coast, in defiance of revenue-cutters and men-of-war's men. In short, a primitive law-breaker and rover, with all the impress of adventure and character upon him.

Very seriously, your repeated harangues on parish laws, and other laws, together with my own growing experience at second-hand (through the medium of trials on circuit, I mean,) of their true operation upon the mind, and, as you say, the happiness of the country, make me anxious to grow wiser in your favourite branch of knowledge; and so, Mutford, the journal — the journal — and adieu! —

But no — my eye catches the last sentence of your letter, and I will not conclude without asking you, in the name of common sense, good feeling, and your own frame and order of mind, how can you write such mighty absurdity? What! good folks, who lounge or ride at the sea's edge, in Hastings — Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Cheese, from the city, most likely, or, at best, some sapless off-branches of title — echos of aristocracy — they cast expressive looks upon Michael Mutford! My dear Michael, I have heard you say, in poetical mood, that a muddy stream reflects, in its own way, the freshest green grass, and the brightest coloured flower upon its banks. You *will* want confidence in yourself, and then you go on to endow every one else with your own doubt of you — every one else, good simple soul, being as innocent of the malignity you attribute, as you are of the slightest real cause for the want of nerve you hint about. My dear Mutford, I will not, cannot give you quarter the next time you sport with me in such a manner. At present I am severe — I know I am; but am I not, too,

RICHARD GRAVES?

VII.

To Richard Graves, Esq. Hastings.

Dear Graves,

As I had half foreboded, my father felt disinclined for his journey the day before yesterday; but (and as your last reaches me) we are this moment about to leave Hastings. I will keep the journal for you with pleasure, and it shall contain every thing I see or hear of, worth communicating, together with my own thoughts on passing events; or, at least, as many or as much of them as, from experience, I can be very sure will be quite pleasing to you.

I have walked to Battle Abbey, Pevensey Castle, and over every other spot desirable for "Harold's" sake. Farewell! Bessy calls me to lead my father down stairs. Ever yours faithfully, MICHAEL MUTFORD.

Direct still to the Hastings' Post-Office.

VIII.

To Michael Mutford, Esq.

No, my dear Mutford, this must not be between us. I ask your pardon, at once, for any and every word that may have hurt you. I will implore you, if you make it necessary, to forgive me — fully, unreservedly, obliviously forgive me, so that our wide-open-hearted confidence in each other may stand as it did before my last letter. And then you must write to me for *your* last, and after having drawn your pen through a certain sentence of it, and added a postscript three times as long as itself, let me have it again. The words, I mean, I have underlined, though I am sure you would have detected them without any such emphatic marking; for I know you will think of me on the road, although you have begun your journey in some anger with your friend. Once more forgive me. I, the unscarred, and the more fortunate, though the least deserving — I ought to have had more respect for *any* evidence of the sorrows you have long suffered. R. G.

IX.

To Richard Graves, Esq.

(POSTSCRIPT TO MY LAST.)

Forgive *you*, dear Dick, the nonsensical pettishness I have written above (meaning my last short epistle, which I enclose, the sinning words expunged as you wish*). I am — to be sure I am — now and then, a poor maudlin fellow, but the disease *must* be routed out of me; ay, and by myself too. And I will neither take up the scourge

* These appear to have been, — "Or, at least, as many or as much of them as from experience I can be very sure will be quite pleasing to you."

against it, nor reason with it ; I will point my finger at it, laugh at it, and run away from it. 'T is not worth scorn, or trampling under my foot, or it should have plenty of both. So, come and join me in my laugh, and forget.

And yet, Graves, I would not for a good portion of this fair world think so poorly of myself a second time, as your manly and generous treatment of me has caused me to think on the present, or, rather, the past occasion. How very, very little you have made me ! — excuse me,— how very, very little I have made myself. Ay, and there's the very rub, Graves. I have *not* — for the last few years — I have *not* a confidence in myself, such as I see others have in themselves. I *cannot* impress others as they impress me. Every day — the slightest occurrences of every day — bring me proofs of this fact. I *know* I am not valued by men as I value them ; that is, as I respect, or, rather, fear them. I wish I could be hated ! that would restore me to my own good opinion. But this, you will say,— and perhaps truly,—is only the old thing over again. Let us cut it, then, for ever ; or until I require, undesignedly and unhappily, your forbearance and your teachings once more, and then do not spare me. And yet, before we quite pass to another subject, I *will* say, that hitherto —I mean lately — you cannot have guessed how that wretched, hypochondriac doubt of my own place among my fellows has been rusting over my heart, and eating into it. And I remember none of it in the constitution of my boyhood. I was a bold, sturdy, boxing boy, and thought no one better than Michael Mutford, except his father. Graves, it fell upon me in Northumberland. I *have* been crushed, dear Dick ; and though the world knows it not, and must never know it, I seem to read in all their eyes that they do ; their cold, reserved, watchful, estranged eyes. You ask me to give you an instance of the way in which I think I fail to impress myself. Graves, in ten thousand ways, in almost every way ; and, I repeat, at almost every moment, and with every one I meet ; my equals, my inferiors, 't is all the same. Shame and wretchedness to avow it ! I am convinced that the man who sat by my side down from Hastings, almost the very last individual I have held pass-

ing intercourse with, bears himself up better than I do, is more an object, a figure in the world. Such is my horrible character or delusion. But you require some instance that you can recognise ; that has passed under your own eye. You have noticed the unevenness of my general manner ; you have hinted your knowledge of it to me — so you do ; at one time,— indeed, at most times,— inclined to be pleasant and good-humoured, then suddenly cast down and silent. I speak of myself when in your presence with others ; alone with you, I believe I am usually what is called a good-humoured companion. Well ; there has not been a single change in me, from open-hearted to reserved and silent, observed by you, for which I had not a specific cause, or have not thought I had. I will take the very last evening I spent with you. Your supper-table was surrounded by rich men, all except me. I did not care for them at first, and we chatted and laughed pleasantly some time. One of my favourite theories started up ; you engaged me on it : we argued vigorously ; while I was haranguing my last harangue, I caught young M—— raising his eyebrows at a friend across the table. I was dumb for the night ; you wondered why ; now you know why. You know it, and you smile a piteous though a most friendly and affectionate smile over my accursed weakness. Yet I tell you the truth. And these are the things, dear Graves, that turn in upon me, and rankle, and rankle ; and I must give you to understand that never does one of them so fix its contemptible spider-fang in my mind but it calls up the one agonising recollection of past suffering, and insult, and degrading wrong ; and so, for ever and ever, I fear and doubt.

But now, in good earnest, farewell for ever to this most hideous topic. I owed the present confidence (such as it is !) to your last good, kind, tear-starting letter ; yes, dear friend, it softened, and, I hope, bettered me. I do not mean, however, to persecute you in this way any more. And if you shall feel assured that these confessions call for your observation, I pray you spare it, — now, at least, — now and for a long while. Let me try to take myself in hand, unassisted, for a season. I write this from the place

where my father thinks it likely we shall fix our temporary abode, though I differ from him. Do not answer me till I send you another letter replying to certain passages of one of yours about poachers and smugglers. Meantime, believe me the very same I have been to you,

M. M.

X.

To Richard Graves, Esq.

Such a bold smuggler, my dear Graves, as you seem to hope for, I cannot promise to catch for you. A beautiful ideal has got into your head, unconsciously made up of the Corsair and his kind, if not by Harriet Lee's magnificent young tiger, the model, perhaps — (nay, *I* am sure,) — for Byron's whole family of heroes. England is too old for a single character of the description you want. It is only on thinly-populated coasts, and among fresh people, that he can be found. Our island is too well stocked for him ; and ages of the experience of strong feelings have worn out, ages ago, the very elements of his nature, even amongst the lower orders. Not a man in England at present could so much as gesticulate like him. Nay, not a lugger's crew on the coast would work a cargo under his command ; they would think him an ass, and put their tongues in their cheeks at him, particularly if it were hinted that he brought to his trade a single motive more romantic than that of gain.

No ; you must be content with a man, whenever and wherever I may meet him for you, as like other men as is possible, or, at least, like all others who share his social rank, and brave perils every day for existence and profit ; a courageous and skilful mackarel-fisher, for instance. There shall be " no sneering devil in his look," no melodramatic frown upon his brow, nothing picturesque in his dress, nothing impressive or striking in his walk or mien ; nothing about him, in fact, to single him out from the monotony of manner which has seized upon man, woman, and child in England ; to single him out as a smuggler, I mean ; not forgetting, of course, that he must still have

his own peculiar characteristics for the notice of those who know him well.

And if you can be content with *such* a hero, of such a one I have already heard, though our personal acquaintance is to follow, I hope — have patience, and you shall learn how. But do not let this preparation inspire you with expectations of a romantic incident. Our journey to this little watering-place was *triste* enough. 'T is a cold, rainy, foggy June, and nothing could well be less interesting than the road after our second day's progress from Hastings; now winding a little inland through a flat country, now running over the still flatter sand and shingles, within view of the bleak sea; mist our atmosphere in every change. The sole objects of attraction were the martello-towers; but even they occurred so often, and were so perseveringly alike, that the sixth or seventh tired, and left no patience for the twenty-ninth or thirty-first. Individuals or groups of their garrisons, too, seen now and then trailing a little barrel of fresh water from a remote spring, and all doing it so exactly in the same way, and all looking so like one man, multiplied through a diamond-cut glass, that at last I turned away my head from them, although they were almost the only living creatures we met for some time between village and village.

Upon the second evening we came in view of our proposed place of residence; and I had no sooner seen it, partially, and from a distance, than I had an omen it would not long be the place for us. A little row of narrow, tall, red-brick houses were cutting in chill shadow against the dull-coloured sea; their prim chimneys gadding up into the air, without emitting many puffs of smoke. Evidently they had been built by a few speculating individuals to try and give the little retired place the air of a respectable bathing-town, and, except for a few months of summer and autumn, remained uninhabited, or but insufficiently so; and hence the want of warm vapour from their cheerless hearths, for visiters had not yet arrived.

We approached the village over a sandy, pebbly flat, where the sea must have once and not very long ago reached, — it was not now fifty yards from our wheels, — and entered

the main, the only street — a very, very uncomfortable one to look upon. You now saw the flimsy texture of the red-brick houses, and their paltry lording it over the few aboriginal cottages left to group with them or confront them. The three bathing-machines stood desolately on the shingles behind them; fishermen idled at the brink of their element; women leaned over the half-doors of their hucksters' shops; the butcher and *his* shop seemed empty both, and gave little promise of London roast-beef; and the paddling and gabbling of the children at a ditch, opposite to the middle of the aristocratic row of houses, could not enliven the wide, unpaved, almost uninhabited street, or rather road. After all, however, you must remember that I made my observations through two mediums, — the misty, rayless evening, and the mood which it helped to fix me in. Doubtless, a fine day and the arrival of gay visiters will wonderfully change the face even of the red bricks. And you must not suppose that it is the want of small bustle in this little place which makes me think it will not suit us as a residence; no, — but something like the contrary, — the promise it holds out of an influx of just the kind of wandering idlers, whose ways, whose selves, and whose *influence upon prices*, we are compelled for the present to shun, and whom we were led to believe we *could* shun by coming here; for the good folk of Hastings, thinking and speaking, of course, in recollection of their own brilliant town, assured us it was the most retired bathing-spot in England.

But alight with us at the inn. The young landlady received us alone, at the wide-open door of a large yellow-washed building, ushered us into a spacious hall, and then up-stairs into a sitting-room, the whole length of her caravansary, half-carpeted, half-furnished, and having an end bow-window looking down upon the shivering sea, and, — as if itself were not enough, — supplied with a huge telescope, to afford us at our leisure as much as ever we liked of the waste of waters. We objected to a room so spacious and chilly of a cold evening, although one in June. Our proprietress assured us most faithfully that every other sitting apartment was occupied; but a fire

could be lighted in a moment, and we would soon find that the ball-room of the Anchor was most comfortable.

Hitherto no waiter had appeared; but as she was about to leave us, an old man entered, whom I had observed running after the coach, so soon as it showed a tendency to the Anchor, and he was the waiter; not permanently established in the house, indeed — that could not be afforded, at least till visiters should begin to crowd in for the summer; but living with his wife in a little cottage, into which great four-posted beds had been dragged, as I afterwards learned, for the purpose of enabling *it*, too, to hang out, "in the season," a label of "apartments furnished."

He approached us down the long ball-room, looking very grave and interested, rubbing his hands, bowing, and bidding us welcome to the Anchor. He seemed to value himself upon his manners, as highly ornamental as well as necessary to his important situation. He began to make neat speeches in praise of the place we had come to visit. When we enquired about dinner, he was eloquent, — alas! with the usual curse of eloquence, loss of time, — in praise of the abundance and excellence of every viand (and that was every possible one) — within our reach and at our service; and, in fact, although very amusing, we found nim for that occasion very tiresome.

He proved more tolerable after dinner. Having talked almost all the time he was waiting on us without being attended to, the old man's tongue at last made some impression on our ears while his fish and mutton were digesting. And now, listen you also, Graves! In the middle of one of his politest observations, I interrupted him with, "And have you plénty of smugglers here?"

The question, as well as the uncouth suddenness of it, seemed to shock him: he stopped the gentle rubbing of his hands, bowed, did not raise his chin from his breast again, mumbled something unintelligible, and then stood silent. I repeated my enquiry in a more measured manner: he answered by an elaborate encomium on the morality of his native place. When close pressed, he admitted, that, so convenient to the sea, and the French coast so near, and brandy and other things so dear by reason of the King's

duty, it was but natural to suppose that a smuggler might be found; for his own part, however, he could not be expected to know any thing on the subject: his very situation as waiter to the Anchor, where no brandy but the most lawful brandy, and the very best, was to be had, incapacitated him from making an observation; and saying all this, and much more, he retired at my emphatic "Oh, very well."

I expected him back again, however, and back, indeed, he came. No one had rung for him, no one wanted him, he had no business of his own in the dreary ball-room; still he gently turned the handle of the door, slid in his spare limbs, clad in knee-breeches and blay-thread stockings, and pretended to arrange nothing at all on a side-table. We took no notice, but only smiled at each other: he hemmed once or twice, still we accosted him not. He pemanded most respectfully if he could serve or oblige us in any way; and at length yielding to his late solitary wishes or gossip, indulged in the kitchen or elsewhere after last leaving the room, he came nearer, and in an accommodating low voice said, "I have been making some enquiries since, gentlemen."

I tolerantly encouraged him to unburden himself; and, after much preparation, he gave us to understand, that, although none but loyal brandy was to be had in the Anchor, at the loyal price of course, he entertained few doubts of our being able to procure a much cheaper liquor, and some thought, almost as good, after we should have been settled in a house, or in lodgings, according as we deemed fit; such, at least, was the information he had just obtained at a friend's, in the street, nigh at hand; and as to the matter of lodgings, there was a very honest woman lived quite close by the Anchor, and she had furnished apartments to let, the nicest and tidiest, certainly, if not the most fashionable, in the neighbourhood; just such as would suit a small respectable family, who might wish to live to themselves; (the old gabbler's penetration! and I winced under it, Graves, fool that I was;) and it was still lightsome enough for looking at her lodgings, and he would be happy to show us the way, if we pleased; and it occurred to him that this

very respectable, elderly woman knew as much, if not more, than he did, about making the proper enquiries concerning good and cheap brandy; and all he would take the liberty of requesting at our hands was, that we would not hint to the mistress of the Anchor his interference on the subject; indeed, he would also feel obliged if we omitted to mention his services in directing us to a lodging; inasmuch as our present good landlady might imagine he had rather improperly neglected the interests of her establishment, in both instances, to say nothing of his acting immorally, against the law of the land; and——

He ceased at last, and I saw he had not uttered a word of what I expected. Nay, his brandy anecdotes and suggestions vexed me, not only because they were uncalled for, but because he so easily took it as granted that we were just the sort of people to aid—and in so humble an instance—his smuggling friends in cheating the King: however, we had ordered no wine at or after dinner. I was about to say something reprehensive to him, when my father anticipated me, telling the old fellow that no one had asked him to declare by what means we might succeed in taking off his hands, or off those of his friends, part of their last stock of smuggled spirits.

At this he looked overwhelmed; and had rudeness been in his nature, had his thin and meagre nerves been able to entertain it, doubtless he would have vindicated himself to our annoyance. As it was, his pale, drawn, sallow features expressed only consternation, and his denials of my father's charge were confined to tones and language which, in a similar position, real innocence might envy.

"Yes, however," I insisted, "and the honest woman, whose lodgings you praise so highly, is your wife?"

He was within a respiration of denying this too; but, suddenly checking himself, gravely, and with an air of timid self-assertion, admitted the fact; adding, that although he had said a few words in praise of Mrs. Moffit's apartments, we would find others say more—more indeed than befitted the lips of a near connection of hers; and, besides, we could form our own opinions on the matter, by just stepping over to her house,—(he did not call it *his*

house, nor had he, ever since his detection, called the lodgings *his*,)—only permitting him to acquaint her with our intention beforehand,—that is, he meant that he should prefer leaving the Anchor a few moments before us, if it were but to avoid his mistress's observation—a shrewd, though excellent young lady.

I was amused, as also was my father, at his own consummate, though mere village shrewdness, so obvious through his last discourses; its intermixture with his then timidity and farcical suavity of manner (the latter supposed, doubtless, to be admirable, and very like the gentility of head London waiters, not one of whom he had ever seen,) was really fresh and entertaining. My father assured him, however, that Mrs. Moffit could not be visited till morning, although she and her apartments should then have the preference of a first observation; and I again abruptly changed the conversation by saying,—

"But unless you gratify our curiosity with a good account of the most popular smuggler captain on your coast, never shall Mrs. Moffit be visited at all."

Certainly, to the very best of his ability, it was his place and business to give all the information he could to any guests at the Anchor; not meaning to say that upon the present topic he was as much at liberty to speak, or indeed as well-informed, as upon others he might be found to be. Gentlemen would learn, upon enquiry, that during his life of sixty-five years, spent in that neighbourhood, Richard Moffit was believed to be a moral, inoffensive man; yet some whispers of what we were pleased to be curious to learn he could not have avoided hearing: his conversation out of doors, this evening, since we had arrived at the Anchor, farther enabled him to oblige us; and, in fact, the most celebrated owner and captain of a lugger, about, was one Lilly-White.

"A singular name," I remarked: "was it his real name?"

Yes; my informant was quite sure that his name was White.

"Ay," I said, "but the other name, 'Lilly,' was that feigned, or real?"

Why, he protested, he should think so: he saw no reason for supposing that it was not.

"It was a very unusual one, however: were there any other persons who bore it in his native place?"

Not one;—stop; he would think; no, not one that he could bring to mind.

"It seems a nickname," I resumed: "is he a very fair-complexioned man?"

Either the aim of this question was guessed at by my simple old friend, or he could really give me no information. He had never seen Lilly-White, he said, so was no judge of his complexion.

"Nor heard him described?"

"No; not in particular." Now I began to suspect Mr. Moffit of an apathetic ignorance on all subjects not immediately connected with his calling, or callings,—a trait of mind much more common among the lower orders in England than among those of any other civilised country. With a strange association for a motive to the particular kind of question, and a wish to gauge his standard of intellect for a motive to the question at all, I marched him to the bow-window at the end of the ball-room, and asked him how he called the smooth, raised ground which ran under it, immediately over the shingles of the sea? "The Parade," he replied (every little hamlet bathing-place must now have its "Parade," after Brighton).

"And why was it called the Parade?" I asked again.

He looked baffled, and most seriously at fault: I pressed my question; and at length he declared he did not know, unless it might be because Mr. Brotherly kept his circulating library on it. I was satisfied as to the state of his mental energy, and brought to mind, with some laughter, the circumstance which had suggested my rather irrelevant question. By chance, I once enquired of a native of Seven Oaks, Kent, why a certain smooth field outside his little town went by the name of "The Vine:"—"because they plays cricket on it," was *his* answer. And ever since, when I am prone to find out the powers of reasoning from cause to effect of one of my insulated countrymen, I propose a query touching the appellation of some spot or

object of his native place, as on the present occasion I did. But return we to Lilly-White.

"Could I be informed on what account he was held to be the most celebrated smuggling hero of his coast?"

"Certainly. He had the greatest success of any, and was the richest."

"How rich, for example?"

It was hard to say; but very rich. He had built some houses for visiters, in the season, and purchased others; and his brother lived in a large farm-house, in a little lonesome village, at some distance, taking care of his daughters for him, and perhaps other things; and there was a large farm attached to the house, which the brother farmed — on his own account, he pretended; and he also let it be believed, that house and all were his: but this was well known to be only a make-believe of Lilly's, who had his own reasons for not being set down as a wealthy man.

"Lilly-White, then, could not have sustained many losses in his unlawful and perilous trade?"

"Some losses, certainly. He had been 'exchequered,' to a large amount, for contraband articles found in his farm-house, and even in his pockets; but his savings allowed him to pay the fines, and still be rich; nor could these accidental losses be said to have sullied his general character for success and good fortune in his profession; for though his lugger ran in a cargo almost every two months, some point or other along the cliff, and though a cutter was always watching her at sea, and double guards of men-of-war's men ashore, she had never been surprised, nor 'never lost a tub.'"

"Had she ever been chased?"

My old acquaintance looked disturbed, but answered collectedly, "Not that any one knew of." I gave him his own time, and he continued to hint, in a whisper, that two things, however, two rather "oudacious things," were suspected of Lilly-White. It was conjectured that he was not far from the lugger which ran in and landed, and safely disposed of a cargo, in the middle of the noonday, last Good Friday, near Hastings, while the blockade men were drawn off the coast, and in the town at divine service; and,

lately, his friends feared that if those who fired at a King's vessel, during a hot chase, in the middle of the Channel, and for whose discovery large rewards had been offered, if they could be brought to justice, Lilly-White might be brought to trouble. My at last communicative Mr. Moffit ended his anecdotes for the night, by allowing me to understand that every second-rate or second-hand smuggler in the village and about it, men and women, were all customers of Lilly, and to some extent or other confidants; that he could summon, at a beck, three hundred, or, if necessary, double that number, from far and near, to aid him in "working a cargo," any fine dark night in the year, at any point he might fix upon; that he cared no more for the coast-blockade than he used to care for the riding-officers, who, before the close of the war, preceded them in the preventive service; that——

"But how does he make so light of them, and of their good pistols and cutlasses?" I interrupted.

"Bags and carts some, sir, and, 't is thought,—though I, for one, will never believe the story of the King's sworn men,—bribes others," answered Mr. Moffit.

"Bags them?" I asked in considerable surprise. And the head waiter of the Anchor was about to satisfy me, when its mistress suddenly opened the ball-room door, and called him angrily away; and I have not since had an opportunity of requesting him to resume his lecture.

But here, as I promised you, dear Graves, you have a first and faint sketch of the most romantic smuggling captain on this coast. And he turns out to be of the kind I warned you to expect; a rich fellow, using only the common-place aids of cunning and prudence to insure success in his ventures; with a comfortable, common-place house to live in, when his leisure or his plans allow or induce him to prefer the land to the sea for a residence, and with his children, and, doubtless, their housewifely, respectable mother dwelling therein: but, by the way, I should like to know more of his establishment; whether it *is* orderly, and within order and law; whether that housewifely, respectable lady is married or single, and so forth. For though I can never bring myself to regard smuggling with

the full legal horror in which some people contemplate it, I admit my great doubts that it assists in keeping a man moral in other respects. Indeed, how can it? it is the breach of a law, though not a divine one; and with the uneducated, or the half-educated, the breach of one law leads to—seems to sanction—the breach of another; and these, in a country where the institutions of God are (if I do not say *confirmed*, what can I say?) confirmed by act of parliament, it is easy stepping from law to law, till the most important and sacred are trampled under foot. This is loosely argued for the present. Perhaps I may link my chain closer another time. Now take it as you can get it; and good-by, dear Graves, for a day or two. My long epistle goes to you by coach, for—it is the beginning of the journal.

M. M.

XI.

To Richard Graves, Esq.

For my month's silence, and leaving unanswered many of your friendly and anxious letters, dear Graves, what excuse can I make? I will attempt none, if I am not able to give you reasons instead. First, then, "Harold." He chose to take full possession of my mind, immediately after my last despatch, and—I have finished him, and he is in the manager's hands by this time. Secondly, unless, I had sat down to write to you about nothing, during the half hours or hours he left me at leisure, there was absolutely no use writing to you at all. Next, I was mightily listless and lazy, during all those hours and half hours: and, lastly, dear Graves—for I *am* to give you my confidence—uneasiness of mind, if I *had* a minute to spare from laziness, at once incapacitated and made me unwilling to address you. Yes, I *will* mention to you, that my father's circumstances cause me, every day, increased disquietude. I have discovered by chance that he is even poorer than he owned to me. Strange to say, he had made Bessy more of a confidant than me, and her secret fits of crying, in which I more than once surprised her, tempted enquiries at my hands that her gentle and yielding character could not long resist.

But, "Harold" finished and despatched, my heart is lighter. So far, I have done as I ought; and hope—or something like it, in me, though, alack! not like early hope—whispers good results. While my effort was only progressive, you may imagine the kind of uneasiness I have spoken of, when you also recollect my discovery arrived at through Bessy.

And so, I am scribbling to you again, and at last. And about what at last? any thing, as you shall see.

Notwithstanding my gloomy description of our arrival here, I must now inform you that, with one or two exceptions, it is a very charming little place to live in. I may say, without any exception, that it is a charming place to walk in. Try a sea walk. Immediately outside the village the land begins to rise from the shingles, and you ascend gradually till your path is by the brink of sheer precipices of a great height. A little inland arises the barren, lumpy, blackish summit of the most considerable point on the coast for many miles. Gain this windy, and almost uninhabited eminence, and before you, and falling again, leap after leap into the sea, the cliffs curve away to an immense distance, their white sides livelily contrasting with the green sward that runs flat to their edges. You quite look down upon their whole broken and jumping line, and they, and the seemingly glassy sea, against whose light surface they are painted, have a map-like appearance, upon a huge and—I don't know how or why—an awful scale. Turn to your right. The graduated mountain upon the top of which you stand slopes in land from you, in spacious and majestic undulations, beginning to be cultivated at about its second-last slip beyond your vision, forming immense valleys, flats, and convex sweeps; and within, or upon some of these, dwindled to spots in distance, cows and sheep are grazing. Still you are in perfect, almost primitive solitude, with a feeling of your position oppressing and yet exciting you; a jumbled consciousness of vast extent, great height, savageness, natural convulsion, and the strength of the struggles of the tempest with the ocean.

Almost uninhabited I have called this solitary region. It would be wholly so, but for the signal-house upon it,

in which a few men-of-war's men perform, night and day, their apportioned duty against smuggling. And yet I do not know if their single little bleak dwelling much intrudes upon the whole character of the scene. Does a single edifice of any kind ever do so, in an extensive and peculiar solitude? Perhaps not, but rather the reverse. It makes you whisper "How lonely!" and thus distinctly is expressed your sense of the master-impression. The solitude overpowers the rival idea of inhabitation, by its tremendous contrast. Nor, as I strolled near the group of men who burnished their weapons, or walked as sentinels, outside the signal-house, did their appearance seem to be unsuitable to their situation; on the contrary, as half-stripped of their not un-brigand attire, they eyed me in the reserved and sullen silence and scrutiny which their service teaches them to assume, I felt that the figures well became the scenery. During all my walks, indeed, by the coast these blockade-men have interested me. They seem so isolated, each upon his prescribed promenade over the smooth sand or the rough shingles; so cut off from commerce and sympathy with their kind, though, near to and at the village, little crowds pass them or stand almost at their elbows, talking, and laughing, and gabbling as *they* must not do; and their imposed silence, and the sense of their duty and predicament, gives such an unnaturally passionless or stern character to their features — often young and comely — and they stand so prepared, from morning to night, with cutlass and pistols, brow and eye, to enact their fierce duty upon all of a smuggling cast of face, who seem to approach them too nearly. Poor fellows! along with this curse of loneliness, and the temptations to absolute misanthropy which it includes, theirs must be a miserable service during the long, moonless, and howling nights of winter. Sometimes they fall over the cliffs, and are drowned or dashed to pieces, when the swelling of the sea compels them to keep watch on the path of the high land.

But we are still upon the mountain's top, and as yet you have but looked before you, and to your left down upon the cliffs and the sea, and to your right to the point at which the barren land disappears from you at a dip

towards the mountain's yet unexplored base. Glance farther to the right; another considerable eminence, with an unseen but richly cultivated valley between, confronts the height on which you are, and its summit is barren, too, and a little craggy, though upon its noble breast are clumps of fine trees surrounding stately or elegant mansions, and waving fields of green and yellow, cottages, gardens, and the commencement of a village, of the continuation of which an interposing curve of land deprives you. Turn your back to the savage sea, after having ventured to peep down upon it from the verge of the point's steepest and most abrupt precipice,—(feeling somewhat impatient, by the way, of the *material* of which the precipice and its grand *forms of rocks* are made, — chalk, chalk, soft, crumbly chalk, that belies in some degree the first general impressions of stupendous solidity, — and its colour, too, making you smile at the notion of the entire line of cliff having been whitewashed,) — turn your back upon the sea, and then upon the signal-house, and then upon the whole desolate scenery you have been studying, and descend inland towards the haunts of men. Before you have half travelled your path, very gorgeous is the view that comes upon you, of a continuation of the coast in the direction opposite to that towards which you have previously turned your face. Your eye bounds like a bird over the dots of the houses of the little village whence commenced your walk, and flies zig-zag with the land by the sea's edge to other villages, other points, and others and others still, for thirty miles or more, the last dreamy line mixed up with the rich white curling masses of the noonday clouds; and round martello-towers, or round redoubts of much greater compass, serve for resting places at every flight, as it were, of vision; some glowing white against the sunless sea; some, in their turn, shadowed by a cloud, while the sea laughs brilliantly behind them. And fail not to observe the ceaseless play of light and shade, of delicate shadow or positive obscuration, or bursting, straggling rays, or unobstructed sunshine, upon the fields of waters themselves; here, making them as green as grass in winter, and

seemingly opaque and solid, there dying them deep blue or sullen brown, and there party-colouring them like a prism, and there sweeping them with dazzling lustre. And see, now and then, close by the land, and at such a distance as to cheat your glance of all motion, the veiled waters partake of the colour of the sand, or of the meadows, or of the marshes adjacent to them, and, under the magic influence of light and shadow, all, — all, solid and fluid, — seems a flat of wild mountain moor, or of stagnant fen, checkered with a thousand vague tints and expressions.

Descend your hilly path, and so close all your sea-views. Ten minutes now bring you into a highly-cultivated country, apparently as much inland as if the coast were forty miles off. Here you feel no sharp air, hear no dash or roar of waves, or rumbling and clattering of the shingles after their receding; and I need not add, that the waves themselves are completely hid from your view. Wind your way homewards. By short cuts, through teeming and almost ready fields of bright-surfaced wheat or silken-surfaced barley, you will soon gain a village, after passing two or three less considerable ones, which, for the present, you are bound to call — home. It is about half a mile from the village at the sea-side, which I described to you, under the influence of a bad evening, as our resting-place upon our first arrival here; both are connected, as well by pleasant paths; inside "hedge-row elms," as by a good road; and all around me, as I at present write, smile seclusion and cultivation, and embowering trees, before whose screen curls up the common-place but always delightful blue smoke of the cottage or the farm-house; and still I catch not a glimpse of the sea, nor an echo of his chafings, although a run of a few minutes would enable me to plunge into his cooling bosom, or glide in a pleasure-skiff over his surface.

After all, then, we have not adopted Mr. Moffit's recommendation of a lodging, nor, in fact, have settled down at all in any of his red-brick houses? On this point I have a few words to say, dear Graves, which, if

they give you no information, may amuse you. At some of my words, indeed, I know you will scarce smile; perhaps you may even feel disposed, in spite of yourself, to shrug your shoulders or yawn at the details of petty misery to which a want of affluence exposes one in purse-proud England. But, no matter, the rigmarole journal must be filled.

We sallied out the morning after our arrival to Mrs. Moffit's lodgings. At a glance we saw they would not do. Rooms of the smallest size papered with different patterns, stuffed with second-hand, nay, I promise you, fourth, or fifth, or tenth-hand articles of massive old-fashioned furniture, and approached by a little straight staircase not much more than two feet wide. In the dog-days, or even less ardent weather, one might as well go lodge in an oven. And yet I saw that my father balanced between the prospect of inconvenience and the hope of low rent, until, having spoken of terms to Mrs. Moffit, that good housekeeper mentioned a weekly sum which drove him quickly out of her house: it was on a par with what people demand of you in London in the season.

We then looked at other apartments. The same exorbitant rent was insisted upon in many instances; and we found that so far from escaping extortion in this little out-of-the-world place, — as regarded lodgings, at least, — we did not stand a chance of comfortable accommodation for double the money which our circumstances enabled us to offer. Now, good Graves, there must be something unnatural and artificial, ay, and unenduring, too, in the habits of living of a community, who, one with another, cannot afford to sell the conveniences of life at less than treble, quadruple their value. At last we entered the house of a poor woman whose demand came near our means of paying her. It was even one of the red-brick edifices, but one of the last and the humblest of the row. Boasting two stories, its walls were not more than nine inches thick; its staircase rivalled Mrs. Moffit's, or the steps down to the cabin of a packet-boat, for narrowness and straightness; and when you walked across one of its rooms, the whole building and every thing in it shook and clattered, so as

to startle you. The proprietress was a comely, tidy, poorly-dressed, anxious, frightened-looking woman. A crowd of beautiful children followed her, gawkishly, and at a distance, while she exhibited her apartments; and she had left two more, the "great girls," to take care of her little shop of odds and ends, below stairs. We all liked her; nay, as we afterwards found, pitied her, without knowing why; and as soon as she mentioned her "guinea and a half a week," we were her tenants. This was a guinea less than Mrs. Moffit had spoken of, and we wondered why our landlady demanded for better lodgings than those cherished by that lady so comparatively small a sum. The cause soon became apparent to us.

Her husband was a village *roué*, of the least agreeable stamp. He had spent, in that rendezvous of idleness and vice, so ostentatiously placarded, at the present day, in every village of England, "The Tap," as well as in other places, and with other than its companions, all their little property; he would not, though a good artisan, work at his trade to earn a shilling for her, her children, or himself; so soon as he thought the little till in her little shop contained a few shillings of savings, he was in the lordly habit of breaking it open, if she refused him the key, after first blackening her eye: from all these circumstances, the spirit-crushed woman hourly feared that utter poverty and starvation would close round her little family; and hence, in precipitate anxiety to let her lodgings, that so she might secure a weekly sum, or part of it, for them, she had descended from the unconscionable terms insisted on by her less necessitous neighbours.

We have since regretted that we did not at first become aware of the cause of the cheapness of our lodgings; for, much as the poor woman commanded pity, we certainly should not, in that case, have taken them. And we waited but few proofs of the character of her husband; (the fellow would pass for a gentleman, by the way, dress dandily, and follow his pleasures, at his leisure—nay, I have seen him go a shooting, with a double-barrelled gun in his hand, and a setter at his heels—do you find nothing artificial and unenduring here, again, Graves?) the screams of his

wife and children, as he beat her and them, and knocked some pieces of furniture against the wall, on two occasions, and his coming home from the tap, or elsewhere, at day-light, upon one occasion, was enough for us, and sent us to look after a new home.

These are some of the matters, Graves, that I doubted would read very pleasant to you. I do not write them in a feeling a whit more agreeable than any they may inspire in you; no, nor experience them either. You know my former course of life, and can so assure yourself. You have visited us in the good old family-house in Yorkshire. Nothing paltry surrounded us there; nor, during our two years' residence in France, upon still decreasing means, were things so bad. The French, whatever be their other sins in our eyes, certainly have not the English knack of asking and compelling you to pay three or four times too much for a roof to shelter you, and food and drink to nourish you;—at least not out of the metropolis, and the larger towns. In fact, we contrived to pass for richish people in France. See us now, for the first time, struggling against a descent into almost abject humility. See my poor father, and my dear little sister, exposed, after all their experience of elegant comfort, to know that there is such a scoundrel in the world as the husband of the poor woman I have been speaking of. And so, judge if I recount these incidents with ease of mind. However, were I alone in our present poverty, I think I could compound with its disagreeable haps, for the observation it gains me of new and hitherto unknown or only surmised traits of the mind, and of moral and social habits of that great bulk and great stay of every people, the middle and the lower orders. And as you have led me to surmise that you would listen to me, in a similar view I will continue our lodging-hunting adventures.

At any possible sacrifice, it was now resolved that we would have a house to ourselves, in future: no matter how small, or otherwise inconvenient, provided our means could compass it, we were determined never again to run the risk of being under one roof with people whom we did not know and could not be sure of. Accordingly, Bessy

and I, leaving my father reposing in bed, went out to look about us.

It struck me that house-rent would be more moderate out of the pale of the red-brick sea-side houses; we therefore walked a little way along the road which leads from them to the village where we at present sojourn. At one side of the way were many ready-furnished abodes. We knocked at the doors of two or three, of an appearance such as we once thought humble, but, to my consternation — if you imagine consternation with a smile on its lip — four, five, and seven guineas a week were asked for them. At length we met a little detached, square, newly-built cottage, having little gardens, just laid out, and, of course, bare and unverdant, before and behind it; and, experience-taught, pulled the little bell-handle at its gate, in a kind of resigned despair of our lot. Our summons was answered by a very tall, athletic, straight-backed, striding, handsome-featured, powerful-eyed, disagreeable-looking woman, of forty, or thereabout; she was the wife of the proprietor. We found him in the little parlour of the cottage; answering in stature to his spouse, but gaunt, wasted, and suffering under the continuation of whatever disease had caused his emaciated and skin-dried appearance. He sat in an easy chair, on pillows. His salutation of us was not civil, but I excused or rather passed it by, on account of his indisposition. Nor had his wife been less uncouth when she met us at the gate: her sex was her privilege, however, and I bowed very low, — you will guess *how*, — to a woman, who, by her dress and manners, did not even pretend to gentility of station. But, resolve me, Graves, — what do our good compatriots, of any rank or sex, gain by this?

A few words arranged our business. For two guineas a week the comfortable-looking cottage became ours. The old man boastingly, though in short sentences, engaged to give us possession at an hour's notice, as he had lately been amusing himself building a second cottage, not quite so spacious as this one, at the bottom of his back-garden, and he and his wife could step over, there, in a moment. By this, and other surprisingly short speeches, I apprehended

that he half wished to give us, in a surly manner, a proper idea of how easy his circumstances were, and what an independent person he was; the common foible, often, too often so expressed, of men of his class. I looked at him, and listened to him curiously; and before we wished him a good morning, asked a few questions, the better to make him out.

A musket, a sabre, and a pair of great horse-pistols hung over the parlour chimney. I surmised that the neighbourhood must not be over quiet and honest, since such a formidable array of self-defence seemed to be thought necessary. I was quite mistaken, he said; it was as quiet a neighbourhood as any in England. But, although I paused, he would not gratify me by saying any more. Thus, I was compelled to conjecture other things; and at last he informed me—letting out the words gruffly and in a hurry, and turning away his head, as if I had greatly offended him—that the arms had belonged to him upon two occasions; once, when he was an infantry yeoman and at another time, when he was sergeant of a corps of yeomen-dragoons. His wife, thinking, perhaps, that enough had not been said to exhibit her husband's and her own importance in the world, added, as she began to lay the cloth for dinner, that Mr. Wiggins had gone into the yeomen, twice, while in my Lord ——'s establishment; and he had spent his life so far till a year ago under that nobleman's roof, who was very much attached to him; "the same what he was indeed to herself;" for she, too, had earned her bread, and secured part of their present independence, in the same family; and it was "my Lord" who had given Mr. Wiggins, rent free, the ground they were then standing on, and leave to draw gravel from the common, to help to build the cottage—and a good many other benefactions. And such were the foundations of the consequence of Mr. and Mrs. Wiggins; and for these reasons they could not afford to be civil to any one under a lord—they who, during their whole lives, had lived in the same house with one.

Graves, never, if you can avoid it, become the tenant of a man who has realised, some how or other, an "inde-

pendence" in a great man's family: never do business of any kind with him. The polish of the servants' hall has fitted him to be a very silly member of society, when at last he emerges into the world, towards every human being of a rank less, in his eyes, than that of his peerless patron. I do not fear that the state of the connection between master and servant, in our country, will supply you with many instances of a long period of servitude, in one family, at length rewarded by a competence in old age; and therefore I have few fears of your being often exposed to the temptation of erring against my advice. Some such individual as I at present introduce to you, you may, however, happen to meet; and therefore I cry out again, take no house, nor cottage, nor tenement of any kind from him.

But, most especially, if he retires out of your new habitation to go reside only in "a second cottage, not quite so spacious, at the bottom of the back-garden,"—be not his tenant for an hour.

The prying, gadding, intruding, gossiping habits of the amazonian Mrs. Wiggins first disturbed our quiet. She used to stride across the garden, in the mornings, before we were up—(oh, these delightful facts!)—and enter our premises to scold our one maid servant. She received a polite hint to stay at home. Then forth issued her gigantic husband—in downright truth (almost) a giant's skeleton, clothed—and, dragging his limbs after him, by our fine hall door with two steps, he addressed himself to us, in through an open window. My father was shocked—Bessy frightened, and, as usual, set a-crying. I went out to remonstrate. The old man, trembling with offended dignity, rage, and feebleness, called me names, raised his crutch over my head, and defied me to remove him from where he stood. So, I could only return into the cottage, shut the door, and close the window.

But something was to be done. My father proposed an application to a magistrate, in order that we might be legally protected against the nuisance of the half-mad old invalid. And this has been the chief aim of my lodging-house anecdotes, Graves—this magistrate. Before we come to him, however, let me go on a moment with the worthy

Wigginses; for *their* goings-on, after this scene, have made me smile, and may produce merriment on your face also.

You need not be told that it was a conviction of our poverty, gathered by the domestic observation of our landlady, which prompted this vivacity on the part of her spouse. And as we had not the grace to seek their neighbourly acquaintance—ay, Graves, 't is come to that with us—we were set down for poor, proud pretenders, and now it became necessary to humble us by an assumption of the legitimate superiority of wealth—that is, of their notions of wealth and consideration in the world, as you shall see.

A few hours after his visit to our parlour-window, Mr. Wiggins appeared in his gardens, dressed like any gentleman: I could imagine the exhortations of his amiable wife, as she produced his best suit, and assisted him to put it on: "*it was a better one than their fine gentlemen tenants had between them, at any rate.*" The vapouring old man had also in his hand, to my surprise, a riding whip. My curiosity aroused, I so placed myself as to watch the operations of his spouse, at the back of the premises, while he thus took the air, in quite a brilliant way, in the front garden, and again and again close by our windows. I saw her vanish, more than once, into a little clumsily-built shed—I am sure she had contrived it with her own strong hands, shoulders, and loins, for no regular workman could have imagined or reared such a piece of architecture. By and by she appeared at the door, or hole, of this sty; and, after looking watchfully around her, drew out by the bridle a little rough-coated cob, whom all her curry-combing and brushing could not bring to a decent polish, and led him through her back gate to a lane. Wiggins, obeying a signal, quickly joined her; and in a few moments we had him on the cob's back, trotting up and down the road before the cottage, shaking like a bag of bones, from one side of his old saddle to the other, and doubtless undergoing, poor wretch, a poignant penance, but still trying to grace his steed's back, and to gnaw the ivory handle of his whip, with an air—all in exultation over the stand-

offish beggars that could command no such display of horsemanship. And——

Now for our magistrate:—*magistrate*—my pen seems to grate, writing the word, as if it had caught up some sand in its nib. "Tush!" Well, Graves, yes; tush, I say, also.

A lord—no less; that is, I believe, an earl; Lord Lintern (I hope I do honour to the orthography of his title), and, as I think I have heard some one say, of new creation, and not very long settled on his lately purchased estate, in this neighbourhood.

Bessy, after much persuasion from her father as well as me, agreed to accompany me, as a necessary witness. We did not find the noble magistrate at home, and so were obliged to leave our names, and promise to call again. This small fact has little to do with the matter in hand, you say: "why not take me into the audience-room at once? no matter how often *you* called before you penetrated so far." For reasons, Richard; our second magistrate dislikes me as much, if not more, than did our first, though he has not sinned so deeply against me, and I willingly postpone revisiting him, notwithstanding that he and all connected with him (so far as I know him and them) interests, almost excites me; and next, the fact of not finding him at home, when we called first, has added to my intimacy with another individual, whom I like much better, and whom, in recollection of some of your instructions, I will introduce beforehand to your philosophical observation.

Lord Lintern dwelt some miles from us. Bessy could not, or her father would not, permit her to walk so far this (at last) hot weather. "A fly" was our resource; and I sallied forth to the little stand of these public vehicles, which, during the season, are to be found even in the little village at the sea-side here, drawn up, waiting for customers, with all the importance of a long line of town hackney-coaches. I hoped I might chance to find disengaged one in which my father and Bessy had once or twice before taken an airing; for its proprietor, who was also its "whip," had upon these occasions amused us. And

fortune favoured my hope: I had no sooner come in view of the stand than Master Fox, jumping up in his seat, caught my eye and hailed me, and, at an answering signal, galloped forward to where I stood his ill-matched pair of steeds; one, a black pony, stone-blind, broken-kneed, and very old; the other, a soiled-brown beast, some two hands higher, of tender age, but, short as had been his time in harness, showing little of the spirit of youth in his one eye, or in any of his motions.

Master Fox is a short individual of, as he told me, forty-one and upwards, and the lord of a tallish stout wife, and seven offspring — although, drawing conclusions from his appearance, and the whole expression of his face and manner, I had as lief consider him a hardship-thinned (though not tamed) and hardship-wrinkled, youngish man or lad, of — I know not what age, now that I push myself on the point. You sometimes meet in his station of life, do you not, human creatures whose age is thus puzzling? Going by his features and hands, my only visible guides to his proportions, *au naturel*, I should further conclude that he is as lean and wiry as he is short — indeed, much more so; yet his loose blue body-coat, obviously the gift of some patron of larger dimensions, with its tarnished yellow buttons straddling wide, far below the small of his back, might leave the question doubtful to unstudious eyes. No matter for all that: he is the nimblest, the merriest, and the most gesticulating and smirking of the sons of white Albion whom it has yet been my chance to encounter. He jumps up and down his seat on his fly, to help you into it or out of it, or to fix a buckle of his harness, or to save his steeds up-hill, with the agility and good-will (for the exercise) of an amiable monkey. And he will turn sideways to you upon the road, and chatter alternately to you and to "Polly, missis" (the blind pony), and "Harrit, miss" (the animal of loftier stature), and answer you as gravely as he can when you demand local information, and volunteer a pleasant anecdote, and grin heartily at it, in a way that would be French if it attempted a little more politeness and self-importance, or Irish if — if it *were*; and I am of opinion that an Irish-

man himself could scarce get better out of *that* dilemma of the want of an antithesis. And do not infer from any thing I have said that there is a particle of folly in the mental composition of "Mas'r Fox." Look at his clever though snub nose, and at his sharp little grey eyes, even when they are laughing, and at the corners of his bony-lipped mouth, even when his teeth are fully exposed, and you will suspect no such thing of him. Weigh, too, the whole of his unusual system of being amusing, (after first permitting it, as I did,) and you may find that one half of it costs him nothing, inasmuch as it is constitution; and that, perhaps, he slily hopes to make something by the other half. But this is playing Rochefoucauld. I like my fly-proprietor, notwithstanding all my shrewd observations of him: I like—apart from his merits already touched upon—his industry, his never-ceasing industry; his downright energy (without fuss in it) in the knack of squeezing meat, and drink, and clothes, and fire, and house-rent, and taxes, out of every thing and person he encounters, for himself, and his portly wife, (whom he is so proud of, though, I fear, not exquisitely faithful to,) and his seven little Foxes. For he is not fly-charioteer merely. You meet him carting, or working in the fields, or flying on an errand, or making or mending shoes (he served his time to the trade) at the rear of his huckster's shop on the skirts of the village, whenever he knows he can judiciously let his fly and its steeds stand idle under their little shed. I like him for all this; and for whipping up and spanking in style past his wife's door, and nodding and smirking to her upon all occasions when he can boast a good load of company; and, above all, I like him for his deeply religious turn and notions, and the improving conversations they engender between us. And, now, is not Master Fox better than a magistrate? I laugh with him till the water comes into my eyes.

But, well. It was he, I think, who first informed me that Lord Lintern was almost a new comer in the neighbourhood, as we proceeded for the first time to the magistrate's residence. Other hints of his character were mentioned by Master Fox as we returned homeward without

seeing him; and I comprehended as much as that he was not cordially beloved, that there was a lack of domestic peace and happiness in his fine mansion; and "that he was all for dinner-parties, and evening-parties, and wine-parties,—Sabbath-days and all,—with some people what ought to show him and others a different example."

The last severe though vague insinuation roused my curiosity, and I asked a question.

"Mind your steps, Polly, missis," chirped Master Fox, by way of answer, in the first instance: "see, sir, yonder 's one of the new chapels as I spoke about."

"I know," said I: "I was there last Sunday." And so I was; for you need not be told, Graves, I study in the tabernacles too.

"And the preacher, sir? That man has a real gift: he began in the marshes outside the village, sir; and though he had only a round frock on then, I 'll tell you something about that, sir: we had a young gentleman here, in the season, as good as out of his time for going into *the establishment*,—you understand, sir, one of *his Majesty's sarv'nts*,—but I be blessed if he heard Mr. Boakes more than two Sabbaths when he cum round some't righter, and we have him in Lonnon now, sir, in a chapel of his own. I say, Harrit, miss!" (*chirping.*)

"That tells much, indeed, for your country preacher," I said: "I 'll go hear him again to-morrow" (it was to be Sunday), "provided we shall have time to spare after our second ride to Lord Lintern."

"You left word you would call again to-morrow, sir?" asked Master Fox, gravely.

"Yes; and I engage you now for the ride."

"Thank you, sir, much obleeged; but—I beg your pardon—how will that be?"

"How will what be?"

"On my own account I mean, sir; beg your pardon; but they are strict with us, as they ought to be, you know,—Harrit! leave that stone alone, will you?—and once before, sir, that I drove out a lady and gentleman on that day, they spoke some't of asking me to withdraw my name from the books;—though I be blessed, sir, if

'twarn't a real case of necessity, — and so, you see, — 'morrow, Jane!" — a pretty and not very bashful girl passed us, and I detected a right friendly glance between her and the speaker, — " and so, you see, sir, though I be thankful, as I ought to be, for any gentleman's custom, I — but what d' you think yourself, sir? It 's lawful business, I'm blowed if it bayn't, ain't it? and business as can't be put off to another day ; and I gains my bread by the fly, and ——"

And, in fact, notwithstanding his bodings that the religious community to whom he had attached himself would expunge his name " from the books," he promised to call for us at our house the next day ; and I knew I might wait till then for a more satisfactory answer to the question which " Mas'r" Fox had put off by " Mind your steps, Polly, missis."

* * * * * * *

" I be blessed alive, sir," said Master Fox, half-way upon our road, during our second jaunt to Lord Lintern's, " but here comes one of the very men what I'd rather not meet to-day."

I stood up in the fly, and saw a sad-faced, black-bearded, black-habited person, of about fifty, walking slowly against us, and strewing to either side of the road, at every dozen steps or so, printed papers.

" He sees me, sir," continued Fox.

I perceived, indeed, that the man stopped a little distance from us, bending upon the black sheep of his flock a thunderstruck look, though there was no frowning nor agitation in it.

" Well, Polly, missis, — no help for it, — we must live, Polly ; and so we must, Harrit, miss ; and so," — gently striking his accomplices in sin, while he chirped sadly " go along!" — " Servant, Mr. Boakes," touching his hat respectfully, and very consciously, as the preacher passed us, still looking expressively at Fox.

" What are those papers?" I asked.

Master Fox jumped nimbly upon the road, picked up two or three, presented them to me, and, at another bound, regained his seat. I found them to contain most lively and authentic descriptions of the infernal sufferings in

store for sinners of all kinds, but particularly Sabbath-breakers. Their coarse monstrosity and familiar details disgusted me, and I could not help feeling that such appeals to the lower orders were calculated to demoralise, rather than to inspire a sympathy with the doctrines of a religion of love. I called to mind the young barber who, the other day, speculatively laid out a halfpenny to purchase one of these roadside tracts as his letter of introduction into the house of the old miser, whom, together with his old female attendant, he had planned to murder, and whom he did murder during church hours of a Sunday. I could not deny, either, that the police-offices in London are often enlightened with the involuntary presence of some of the tract distributors themselves. But, worst of all, thought I, worst of all, is the slanderous portrait of the Deity thus imposed upon the mere animal apprehensions of the vulgar.

You will not suppose, however, that I allowed Master Fox to judge of my reveries on the present occasion; on the contrary, he only heard me say, "Do you think that people must be a great deal the better for reading these?"

"Out and out, sir; seldom we hear any thing half as much for our good, *in the old place*, on the Sabbath."

"Probably; and yet the Book of Common Prayer is made up of the most beautiful portions of the Bible, and of little else."

"Yes, yes, sir, like enough; but turned to their own account, sir—to their own account, sir."

"I know; but in what particular way?"

"I'll ask you, sir, if you please, where do they find the command writ down to send a man into my poor clover-field, and take away many a good breakfast and dinner from Polly and Harrit, here?"

Master Fox was begging the question, but I allowed him to chatter on in his own style.

"Or," he continued, "send me a notice,—and I be blow'd if they ha'n't, sir,—to pay them tithe out of my little gooseberry-garden?"

"Is that possible?"

I was really surprised at the anecdote, and doubtful if

the zealous little sectarian did not now seek to prop the case of his grounds of jealousy of, as he called them, "his Majesty's sarv'nts," by a bounce.

"Fact, sir; I don't say as much as that 't is always done, but I know it be done by me;"—(I interrupt him to say I have ascertained that he spoke truth;)—"and these be the folk, sir, what gets up into their pulpit, and talks a few cold words for ten good minutes or so, and then steps down again in their loyal livery, with a cambric handkerchief in their hand;"—(had the critic ever read Cowper? or rather had the round-frocked preacher, who, doubtless, drew this picture for him?)—"and the best they say, sir, finding fault with a poor man for buying a sup of brandy or hollands to give to his poor, dear sick wife, may be, without paying more taxes to the King;—hi, hi, sir! I could tell you a joke about that, or something like it."

"Do, then," I said; obviously, some pleasant conceit had put to flight, for the moment, the grave reasoning of the church reformer.

"'Tis this, sir; Lilly White—have you ever heard tell of Lilly, sir, since you came down here among us?"

I admitted I had; giving the name of my informant, Mr. Moffit.

"Ah, old Mas'r Moff'—I knowed as much, sir, as that he and you might have had a little chat together—for, you see, sir, you don't let people's tongues lie idle when you're within shot of 'em—and it's as like as not that old Moff' was about your very best man to tell a story or two of Lilly White"—(I had thought so, as you may remember, Graves)—"howsomever, that bayn't the whip now in hand, sir; but here it be:—Dr. Bayley, you see, sir—Doctor as they calls him—the tithe-parson of our parish; I'll not say he's one of the worst among 'em;—a quiet, good-natured man, sir, of a portly size, and as sleek as a barn-mouse afore threshing-time—he and his saddle-horse together, sir—being both of a colour, into the bargain,—ay, and as thriving a double chin, sir, on the Doctor, as ever you'd wish to see;—I be blessed, after all, but if he was out of sarvice he'd be what I calls a good'un—but I'm forgetting the shoe on the last, over again. Well, sir,

whenever he preaches what he thinks is an out-and-outer, do you know 'tis all against smuggling and smugglers; in particklar, if he sees any of 'em near the pulpit; and so, sir, one Sabbath-day, seeing Lilly White at hand, the Doctor gave out the best that was in him, and called the smugglers over, at a round rate; and it happened, after the church prayers and organ-singing, that, passing through the churchyard, he spies Lilly again, standing chatting with a neighbour or two; and 'Lilly, my friend,' says he, 'I hope you'll be the better of what you heard to-day.'—'To be sure I will, sir,' answers Lilly; 'only, to tell the truth, you frightened me a bit, one time when you growed so warm.'—'As how, Lilly?' asks the Doctor.—'Why, I be blessed, sir, if I didn't think you were going to speak about them 'ere black silk stockings, what you and I knows something of,' says Lilly."

"A hit of Lilly's, indeed," I observed.

"It was, sir, now, warn't it? but it ain't for not *buying* the King's brandy, alone, sir, instead of the free-trader's, that poor people be called over by the parsons; it be for *drinking* the King's brandy—or his gin, at least—after buying it, into the bargain, sir; as if a poor man, of all men in the world, was never to spend a shilling of his own hard earnings, warming his heart, after a day's work; or supposing he forgot his-self, without meaning it, of an odd time—what then? Does nobody never do the same thing, over their wines, at six or seven shillings a bottle (and who earns that, I should like to know?) in their own fine houses, and in their neighbours' fine houses—ay, for that matter——"

He stopped, with his usual finesse of apostrophising his beasts: I continued the sentence for him; "for that matter, in the very fine house we are going to?"

"You've said it, sir," assented Master Fox, nodding round to me, expressively; and so, as I hoped was to be the case, I gained the information he had refused to supply on the former day.

"But tell me," I resumed; "look over these papers, and inform me which of them you like the best."

A shade of embarrassment crossed Master Fox's brow

as he replied, stooping to lay the whip gently on Miss Harriet's ribs—"You'll look them over for me, won't you, sir, this time, and I'll be obleeged to you?"

"Oh, you generally get some one to do the same friendly office for you, I dare say?"

He did not contradict me; and I paused to admire, dear Graves, the critic of the Book of Common Prayer, who could not read. And then I went on to ask myself—Is it alone the inspired influence of Mr. Boakes which has estranged this little fellow from the established order of things, nay, seasoned his opposition with such severe, if not audacious hostility? and my answer was—No. What then? No matter, for the present. But, Graves, have you ever contemplated the numbers,—I had almost said, the sufficient majority of the people,—take them of every sect, one with another,—nay, do not omit even some of no religious sect at all,—who are this moment fixed in a warfare (of opinion, at least,) against the objects of Mas'r Fox's animadversion? Have you ever brought clearly before your mind, that our middle and our lower orders—nay, our absolutely illiterate—are those of whom the fewest go to uphold the aristocratic displays of good church-of-Englandism put forth in the parish churches, throughout the country, about once a year—upon Christmas day, for instance?—and if so, has your mind stopped working on the subject, just after having assured itself of such facts? I believe not. You have perhaps demanded of the probabilities of human nature some question as—Will dislike and contempt of the religion by law established never tend to engender similar sentiments towards other things by law established? Dare to look the truth in the face. *Have no such results already followed?* Not that sectarianism has, of itself, put the poor and the struggling into the way of reasoning parallel cases; not that mere liberty of thinking and acting on religious points, and nothing else, leads them into the same freedoms, touching matters distinct from saying their prayers. I do not mean so. I suppose, indeed, that—the one great chain of prostration of mind broken—they have been left prepared for what followed;

or, if you like, for what is to follow; but here, also, I fear, they have been sorely tempted.

"And all this, with a Mas'r Fox for your text-book?" Nay, Graves. If I here faithfully report for you, word for word, as well as I can recollect it, the tirade of that eloquent and competent individual, it is—apart from his personal interest—to allow myself an opportunity of telling you, that such are the sentiments, differently expressed according to the different characters of my instructors, which I have been and am in the habit of hearing daily from almost all of the lower classes. Come among them, and talk to them whenever and wherever you can, on the roads, in the fields, as well as under their own roof; gain their trust in you; or rather wile off their distrust of you as a better clad and richer man (heaven bless the mark!) and then make your own conclusions. Often and often you have denied your assent to the supposition that the really rich—in the church as well as out of it—know little or nothing of the people of England: permit, however, the doubt again to be repeated; and further, permit it to be added, that that want of knowledge is as perilous as it is unlovely. Some delusions, you will say, as well as some neglect, have helped to create and to keep up their ignorance. I grant you.

But come. Should you not like to see with your eyes, and hear with your ears, a specimen of the men who, as far as they can go, have revolutionised the mind of Mas'r Fox, and hundreds of thousands of his class? To be sure you should. Accompany me, then, still passing over our visit to the magistrate, a week after the conversation I have transcribed for you, to Mr. Boakes's new chapel.

Upon my second return homeward from Lord Lintern's, with Fox, and in sight of that chapel, we met many anxious faces on the road. My charioteer, claiming acquaintance with some of them, stopped to make enquiries. A very interesting fact, considering our late discussion, was communicated. That morning, an old preacher, much celebrated among Mr. Boakes's sect, had come from a distance, by invitation, to preach a charity sermon. The chapel was crowded. His wife, children, and not a few of

their children, sat near the pulpit. He began his sermon, and enwrapt all his hearers. He proceeded a good way in it; when at a particular text — and, for the occasion, a most remarkable one — he swung suddenly round in the pulpit, fell heavily against its door, burst it open, tumbled headlong down its steps, and was taken up — dead.

Having heard this melancholy and startling tale, and resumed our way towards the village, I remarked to Fox, that I supposed the next Sunday would afford an excellent opportunity for hearing his favourite to advantage, inasmuch, I concluded, as standing in the same pulpit in which the old preacher had been so awfully struck dead, for the first time after the event, one might expect from Mr. Boakes an animated funeral oration, or at least, a sermon closely connected with the fate of his so recent predecessor in his ministry. Master Fox agreed with my anticipations, though not spiritedly or convincingly; however, to the chapel I went, the following Sunday.

A second time we encountered Mr. Boakes upon the road. He did not now look at us, however, with a reprehensive brow.

"And why does he not?" I asked.

"Because, you see, sir," answered my friend, "he knows you and I be going to the chapel to-day, and not on our pleasure, or any business that would break the Sabbath, or to any other chapel but his own; though, I be blessed, sir," continued Master Fox, plaintively, "'tisn't with Sabbath-breaking he has a right to tax me most."

"How is that? I mean, I am sure you seldom or never give him cause," I remarked, not knowing at first what to make of this ambiguous declaration.

"Ah, sir, we bayn't all out-and-outers, like that 'ere gifted man," he continued, still sadly, and now I began to suspect somewhat self-accusingly; for he sighed.

"Few of us, indeed, can boast exemption from the failings of mortality," I answered, sighing also.

"'T is you, I believe, sir; and that's why I say it ain't the Sabbath-breaking: Mr. Mutford ——" here he bent round to me, confidentially in the extreme, and with great earnestness added, "I be blowed, and as I'm a living

lad, earning my bread, sir, I do think I have but one fault in me, that stands between me and Mr. Boakes, or any one else, not having 'lively hopes' of Jerry Fox."

Here I marked some of the conventional words of his brethren, and at the same time remembered the glance which had passed between him and the pretty, bold-looking girl, that day week: I replied quickly, "Courage; which of us is perfect? or of whom can we have such perfect hopes as of Mr. Boakes? But, that one little failing apart, what would be your hopes of yourself?"

"Pretty fairish, sir," he replied, cheering up, and chirping to "Polly, missis;" "pretty fairish."

"Morrow, Jane!" I called out, turning my head quickly, backward. He jerked on his seat, followed my eyes, and when he perceived that no Jane was in view, as, indeed, there had not been, and when he caught my glance and smile at him, I deemed I had never been amused more utterly than by the expression of Mas'r Fox's face, settling itself, after one instantaneous struggle, into —

"I see you take me, sir, and that my remorse and gravity be lost on you; ay, and that you be not going to be as hard on me, God bless you! as Mr. Boakes would be."

"But," I said, changing the subject, "perhaps there was another reason why Mr. Boakes did not get offended with you, just now, for driving your fly: he was driving his wife, I hope — that is, I suppose — I believe," (Mas'r Fox smiled again, with an indescribable "um — well!") "in his own gig."

"To be sure, sir — to chapel; like me, driving you."

"But he could walk, and so could we. Had he that gig, pray, when he used to preach, out in the air, in the marshes?"

"No, sir, nor the wife either," answered my oracle, beginning to chime in with my vein, though he had not now the courage to look at me.

"We need not add, nor the chapel, either," I resumed. "Tell me; what was he then, besides the best preacher you ever heard?"

"He used to live with a farmer, in the next parish, sir, before that," said Fox, shyly.

"And did he get a little money with his wife?"

"Oh, sir, a little, I believe; and she was a bit older as well as a bit richer than him," he added in a whisper, as we gained the chapel door.

It was a small, plain building, stuffed with people, and reeking with heat. There was no seat visible for me, as I entered; but Fox caught the eye of a man who seemed appointed to preside over the arrangements, beckoned to him, pointing sideways at me, and I was soon placed within an open area surrounding the pulpit, upon a form shared by other favoured individuals. Every window was thrown up in the vain hope of gaining a breath of cool air from the sultry and breezeless day which reigned without; and even a trap-door in the middle of the ceiling of the chapel had been removed for the purpose of ventilation — after a glance at which I learned that Mr. Boakes's hay-loft was overhead; some whisps of hay having streamed downward inquisitively, at the corners of the black aperture.

My eyes strayed modestly round the chapel: it was filled, partly with persons of the humblest rank of life, partly with those who hang loosely on the skirts of the middle orders. A thriving shopkeeper, and a popular brewer, as I afterwards learned from Master Fox, were the only aristocrats of the congregation: — the majority of their brethren being in attendance at — the parish church? — no; but at the chapels of other and more "respectable" sectarians.

We awaited some time the beginning of the service. At length Mr. Boakes issued through a private door into the area where I sat, leading an elderly female, in deep mourning, by the hand. This was the widow of the old preacher who had died the Sunday before. Her sons and daughters, and some grandchildren, also habited in mourning, followed her. She and they were placed on a form before me, by Mr. Boakes, and then that individual slowly mounted to his pulpit, or reading-desk. I need not tell you that he wore no ecclesiastical trappings whatever over his rotund person and broad shoulders; but it is

worth noticing, that a simpering smile glistened, along with its "melting mood," induced by the great heat, over his broad, plump, sallow, black-bearded visage, instead of the profound solemnity, if not sorrow, which, considering the occasion, I had simply conjectured would be its expression. But I was to learn more on this subject.

I think the service commenced with a hymn, given out by him, and most execrably nose-twanged, before the congregation took it up, by the clerk who sat under the pulpit — a little man of about forty-five, wearing a very inartificial light-brown wig, and a face, with an affectation of sectarian village piety upon it, the very caricature of the veriest caricatures I had ever seen of his office. He stood up, while he burlesqued the beautiful simplicity of the verses, holding his neck so stiff, and his nostrils so elevated, and closing his eyes with such immeasurable absurdity, that, were I near him, at a convenient time, I could have snatched that prim wig from its block, and stuffed the wretched sounds down his throat with it, until he should open those calf's eyes, and look natural, even in fright. It was beyond my possible anticipations. Some popular farce-actor, — Liston, I believe, — has been said to have discovered his forte, at rather an advanced period of life, by his boys (he was then a schoolmaster) laughing at him, spite of their fears of him, while he declaimed Brutus's harangue upon the death of Cæsar. It is then possible, that in the person of this hideous chapel-clerk we may yet have his rival on the stage.

But, Mr. Boakes. He sat back in his pulpit during the hymn, one of his gigantic fists resting upon, I presumed, an open Bible, the largest volume, I think, I had ever seen; and still he simpered: and, Graves, imagine that simper on that face, almost as huge and as black as an ox's. There was silence, and he arose to pray an extempore prayer. I proceed in no levity of spirit, dear Richard, — God knows I do not, — against pious observances and endeavours in any sect, or in any human being; but if I find such a man, as is now before me, audaciously usurping a place, in the faces of Heaven and of man, for which he must ever *know* he is incalculably unfitted, shall

I hesitate — recollecting, too, his gig and his wife — to paint his portrait faithfully? When I call to mind that, from the place he has thus intruded into, he wields, owing to unfortunate circumstances and facilities, a dangerous power over the happiness, the good, the morals, and the manners of his humbugged followers, — should I hesitate? When those who ought to be well acquainted with the original, and are not, may gain some hints from my picture — am I not called upon to exhibit it? And, lastly, if a wight like this ridicules, beyond the powers of easy comprehension, unless you had been by my side, piety and all appertaining to it — in the name of offended decency, why should I spare him?

I do not intend to do so. I write down, plainly, that his extempore prayer was deliberate insult to its Object; and what must it have been to the unenlightened and vague minds of his hearers? — Good language, tolerable composition, I expected not, and therefore was contented to go without. But its clownish confidence — its taking-for-grantedness — its ask-and-have spirit — its low and pert familiarity with God — and, above all, its exclusiveness — its measuring out of unmeasured and immeasurable love and mercy — ay, to the disciples of Mr. Boakes alone — and the whole delivered with the accompaniments of a still simpering visage, a pair of dull, over-fed, blinking grey eyes, two clumsy arms, now and then extended on terms of "hail-fellow-well-met," and an up-and-down, fire-side, conversational tone of voice — none of this did I expect, none of it could I have expected; and with any of it could I have been contented?

He sat down, as much at his ease as if he had but asked his wife to prepare him something nice for dinner. Singing was resumed. He arose, a second time, to preach: he preached two hours and one quarter — as I am a credible man, he did; and not till within a few moments of his close were the slightest allusions made to the event of the previous Sunday, to the families of mourners under his pulpit, — in fact, to the hearts of his congregation. Having the grandest occasion that the haps of human life can present for taming, first, and afterwards filling

with hope, the rebel nature of man, he permitted it to pass him by, as if it were unworthy of a moment's notice. Can *you* understand the drift of this — the stolid affectation, or the mistaken etiquette, or the inverted sensibility? I cannot; though Master Fox afterwards carelessly told me, in answer to my questions on the point, "'T is their way, sir; they don't like talking of the departed. I be blessed, sir, if they do."

But what, then, was Mr. Boakes's sermon about? I venture to reply, that with respect to what he intended it to be about, — if you allow his roaming mind an intention, — I don't know; no, nor any one who heard him, either. A muddy river (though the comparison is rather old), always slow, yet always flowing on, and sometimes turbid, even in its sloth, and for ever hiding its own bottom — that would be like it. I bent my mind, nay my heart, to comprehend, and, if possible, to profit by it; I did, indeed, Graves, sincerely and humbly; and it is in the same deliberate candour I add, that if the religious *feelings*, not to say *creeds*, of the poorer classes, are to depend upon such teachers as this thriving Boakes, religion will fast disappear from the land.

For, though I disclaim the capability of following or fathoming the troubled stream of his eloquence, I was able, now and then, to catch at a bubble or a straw on its surface, which warrants me in making the last assertion. Upon every available occasion he sneered, till his poor hearers sneered again, at the objects of Master Fox's raillery and contempt; and, most certainly, after eradicating from the immatured minds around him all former guides and stays, he did not even affect to give them any guidance or stay in return. On the contrary, incredible as it may appear, he told them, in so many words, not to place the slightest reliance on any thing he himself had been saying, or was saying, or might say; but go home, with independent minds, and read and grow perfect of their own accords. Why did he stay talking in that pulpit, then, for two hours and a quarter? What brought him there? or what right had he to his new chapel, new house, and gig — wife, I leave out of the question, as

an achievement he might have compassed in his round frock, while working in the farmer's fields, even before he issued forth into the marshes. And — go home, with independent minds, and read, and so forth —how many of them? — or, supposing all could read, at home, and read themselves, each, into independent notions, at home; why not stay at home? Notions independent of his must differ from his; ay, and from those of every one else; and where would he be then? In his pulpit still, if you like; but with what number of hearers? The head of beef! is not his plan (plan!) this? a community of preachers without a listener, each growing hoarse unto his own bare walls; and, worse than that, each primed with enough "independence," (oh, the burlesqued word,) to ——

But forgive me, dear Graves, I *do* harangue out of measure. Lay it to the account of constitution, if not some other thing; and do half admit, in the mean time, that if such a man as Boakes is more an object of smiles than of argument, the cunning zealot may do more harm than even himself can be aware of. Other occasional sentences I carried away with me. At the very moment he inculcated free and unbridled thinking (thinking!) upon every mind, (mind!) what say you to his doctrine of a "particklar salvation?" And then, under cover of such jumbled cant, as "justifying grace," he assured every person who heard him, smiling tranquilly all the time, that, after a certain probation, no man "of God's true church" (*his* congregation) could do a sin. Acts, indeed, *which would be sins in others*, he might fall into afterwards, during his sojourn upon earth, in the unglorified livery of the flesh; but, as sins, they were not counted against *him*. And now, I shall say no more, only ask you to calculate the effects of that precious doctrine upon such an audience, after first urging every individual to read for himself, and then leaving all the sole judges of their own arrival at the point of "justifying grace."

But I must glance at the only allusions which he vouchsafed to the absorbing topic of interest for the day.

He had drawn a blurred outline of future happiness, attained at a jump out of his spiritualised state in this life; and thus, I think, he continued, (do not forget his voice, face, and action, while you read,) —

" As for my brother, as all of us have such reasons to think well of, him as spoke last to you from this place; and as for our sisters and our brethren as he has left behind him" (motioning down to them) — " why, what of him or them? Sure they know, as well as you or I, that he has only gone — only gone," — (here he put out his arms in his usual indifferent manner, allowed his face to simper very much, dropped his tones into convincing familiarity and easiness, and elevated coldly his great fat eyes,) — " pho! — only gone, I say, a little time before them to — to another place, and a better place; surely the separation is nothing, — just call it some place a little way up, — in fact, up," (pausing an instant, for an illustration that would come home to the homeliest mind,) — " why, see, — up to the place overhead;" and here he fixed his glance on the open trap-door in the ceiling of the chapel, and thither all other eyes followed his, looking, I imagined, as if they half-expected to see the grey head of the old preacher nodding down assuringly at them, from amid the scattered festoonings of Mr. Boakes's hay.

" Pho!" he resumed, " what do I speak of? I knew our brother well, and am sure of him. It was but a few months ago that I called on him, when he was poorly for a time, though that wore off; and now you 'll know from what I say, that he was sure of himself into the bargain. ' Well,' I asked him, ' and what be your hopes, now?' — ' Tut!' he answered me, laughing a little, while he coughed, ' quite right and comfortable, quite packed up and ready, waiting for God's coach!' "

And these, Graves, are specimens of the free and easy style of expounding doctrine, upon which such apostles pride themselves in addressing the ready-made inspired.

Too much of this; much too much. Indeed, in looking over what I have written since the evening of our arrival at the Anchor, I decree it unfit for your perusal as it

stands, dear Graves; and so, I will either copy out parts of it for you, from time to time, or else condense and remodel it altogether. My own warmth sometimes, and sometimes my petty details and wretched allusions, sicken me; I believe I foresaw that the latter would inconvenience you. What have you to do with our lodging adventures, and our miserable two guineas a week? or with my idle declamation on passing occurrences or characters? or with my poor-man sneers at an earl? When you asked for people or incidents, you did not ask for that. Besides, though I owe you fullest confidence, and, as this journal proves, feel inclined to give it, *bienséance* whispers me, that for many reasons I ought to suppress all farther allusions to my father's purse and my own; — *bienséance*, say I, — moodiness, say you. Well, I 'm not going to argue it with you; but for the present, certainly, "the journal" must not go as it is. Some future day, when temporary annoyances have been passed by, — *or shall be passed*, at any rate, — every word I have here penned may meet your eye; and then you will judge as leniently as you can of my inconsistency.

Meantime, from the present moment I will go on in such a way as I need not have cause to repent; that is, every word I shall henceforward write, you shall read; that is, if I can.

Now, my magistrate at last, and in good earnest.

Bessy and I, — (I am more sorry than I can say, that she was with me; you may guess why, as I go on; though perhaps not; and, after all, only see reason to accuse me of a new fit of the fidgets,) — we were ushered through a noble hall into a library. (I *will* tell you something that hurt me, tingled through me to the quick of my nails, before we arrived at the house, — ay, although I'm sure of your laugh at me, — that little crabbed monkey, Fox, *after all our confidential discussion*, asked me which door he should drive up to, the hall-door or the door at the rear?)

The magistrate evidently awaited us in his morocco chair. To my bow and poor Bessy's *triste* obeisance he made very little return; he shifted his position as he sat,

that was all. I believe I looked at him after this, not coolly enough to sketch his likeness. And yet you will imagine a man of between sixty and seventy; tall, emaciated, with sunken cheeks, yellow dried-up skin on them, small grey eyes, cold and yet glittering, a long thin nose, and a very narrow slit for a mouth; hardness, energy, self-opinion, and a sense of power, the instantaneous impression upon you of all you behold.

"I have called on magisterial business, my Lord," I began, while as yet he had not invited even Bessy to be seated.

"I know that, sir," he said.

I suppose I stared; and then I handed a chair to Bessy and took another by her side, before I continued: the tears were in my dear little sister's eyes.

"The nature of the business?" he resumed.

"You shall hear it."

I did not "lord" him this time, but entered upon my case, and stated it briefly but distinctly. He comprehended it rapidly; and, indeed, there was abundant intellect upon his high, bald, shrivelled, and cross-wrinkled forehead.

"Your only view in coming here," he said, after I had done speaking, "must be to swear informations against your landlord for an assault, or rather a construed assault upon your own person."

"I wish to observe," I began:—he interrupted me. "Pray, let me speak. I, as a magistrate, have nothing to do with the trespass you say he has committed on your premises."

"I am lawyer enough to be aware of that," I observed; "the attorney, not the magistrate, would be my adviser, had I proposed to indict the old man; but I decline any such thing; he is, indeed, too old, and too infirm, and too irascible, to bear the agitation of law proceedings; and as our object is self-protection, rather than vengeance——"

"You come before me to swear an assault against him, as I have said already. But would there be no vengeance in that course? Particularly when the assault exists in

law only, and not at all in fact; for you have said that he merely raised his crutch or his stick over your head?"

"When you are quite at leisure to hear me explain my real views, why, then, you will comprehend them, my Lord," I said bitterly, like a fool.

"Go on, go on, sir."

"I do not come before you to prosecute for an assault."

"No! then why come at all?"

"In the expectation that, as we are strangers in your county, and one of us, my father, in bad health, and my sister, here, in dread of our absurd old tormentor — a magistrate, in the spirit of a peace-maker, if not exactly in the discharge of his duties, might remonstrate with this Mr. Wiggins, and by his influence——"

"Waste of time to us both, sir: I could do you no good, even were such a step advisable; I have no influence over the man; he is not even a tenant of mine; and — now George," — here he was interrupted by the entrance of a tall young lad of about twenty, with a stolid though handsome expression of face, a nose even longer than his father's, and a sufficient portion, in his manner and air, of that dry, pithless, graceless reserve, which in a good many of his rank and about his age, who have not travelled, would fain pass for superciliousness. Two large sporting dogs followed him into the room, and he carried a long coachman's whip in his hand. Did he smell of the stable? I thought so, but will not be positive.

"Didn't hear you were engaged," he said, indifferently, by way of answer to his father's challenge; and then deliberately shutting the library door, he strode across the apartment, and took a chair; his fine animal eyes — not even noticing me — fixed, all the while, with a dead, insolent stare upon Bessy's very beautiful Leonardo da Vinci face.

The Earl magistrate was about to resume his judgment on my case, when loud, impassioned voices reached us from the lawn before the hall door, at which he started anxiously and impatiently, and turned round to look out at the window; and even his son showed as much interest as

to remove his eyes from poor Bessy, and revolve them in the same direction.

It was only necessary for me to gaze straight on before me, to see as much as they did. In the middle of the lawn, another young man was struggling in the hands of a mean-looking person, who seemed to exert all his strength to keep him fixed to the spot, while both spoke in the highest tone, although their words did not reach us. At the instant my eye caught them, a third person, also of a mean appearance, issued from a solid-built little edifice — it seemed like a green-house — to one side, at the skirt of the lawn, and ran towards the combatants; and at sight of him, the young gentleman appeared to redouble his efforts for liberty, and was successful; his antagonist, if so I may call him, swung round, and fell, and he bounded, deer-like, towards the house.

"Good heaven, George!" cried Lord Lintern, starting up from his magisterial chair, and shaking in every limb — "hasten! quick! and see about this."

The young honourable, somewhat moved, too, though under perfect self-command, was hastening himself to obey this injunction, when hurried steps were heard in the hall; the library-door opened — flew open — and the object of Lord Lintern's interest stood before us.

I never saw so peculiarly striking a person; very young — though I cannot venture to define his exact age — of a good height; slight, and even too slight, yet not emaciated; of a noble carriage, nature's evident gift rather than the dancing-master's or the drill-serjeant's; a visage and features full of strong if not high character, though the one was very pale, and dragged with care, or passion, or harassing, or deep experience of some kind; and the others — the chin, nose, and mouth — sharpened; while the black eyes glistened and flared, and shot out, spark after spark, a devouring excitement.

He bounded in, and faced Lord Lintern, trembling, panting, and seemingly bursting with some vehement appeal he was about to make: he wore no hat; and the heaps of black curling tresses on his fine head shook with the strength of his emotions. The Honourable George Allen

— such, I have learned, is the family name of the Earl — had stepped back at his entrance, and yielded him ready place and predominance. A second had scarce elapsed, when he began to speak, in a shrill, though sometimes hoarse voice.

" So, sir! or, so, my Lord! I meet you again, face to face! — face to face, to go on with our last interrupted explanation! ay, after all your measures to keep us asunder, and to deny that explanation! after all ——"

" Leave the room, sir!" interrupted the old magistrate, advancing upon him — " silence, and leave the room!" and he motioned with his arm, as if partly to enforce his command.

" Have a care!" screamed the intruder, starting a step backward, locking the door and securing the key — " do not *you* lay a hand upon my body: — forget yourself so far —add that to the rest—do, and by earth and heaven——"

" Monster!" Lord Lintern's cadences now rivalled his —" Monster! and no son of mine!" — My blood curdled; noise was heard at the locked door.

" Monster, you! and not my father — or not a father to me!" reiterated the wretched youth.

" Give way — out of the way!" resumed the as wretched parent, approaching the door, and he caught one of his son's arms.

" Not till we speak more!" — and the son seized one of his.

Persons abroad here seemed to use force to open the door; the uproar and horror of the scene grew excessive; but a new incident calmed, in a degree, every thing, and every body. Bessy, who had arisen in a fright, and clung to me, shrieked and fainted. The shriek operated on the young man like the sound of a trumpet on a war-horse; he jumped round from his father to her; and the sight of her then seemed to work him like a spell. I thought I read in his deep and astonishing looks, along with the utmost surprise — for surely he had not observed us before — compassion for her insensible and helpless appearance, self-reproval for having occasioned it, and, I fear —

(though why that word?) great admiration of my poor sister's personal charms.

"Who is this? what's this?" he asked, as if unconsciously, almost in a whisper.

"Your violence has frightened the young lady almost to death, as you see," said his father, also speaking in a comparatively subdued tone; "and you will not now refuse, I am sure, to open the door, and leave the room, and go——"

"Where?" demanded the other, bending a look upon him.

"Up stairs, up stairs, with George,"—recollection of the observation of strangers, induced by Bessy's startling interruption of their strange and revolting contest, had doubtless brought the father to his senses; "and there, I give you my promise, we shall speak as much and as long as you have need for. Do you consent? — you must, if only for the young person's sake; she wants air, and help."

The youth, who had again fixed his regards on Bessy, as she hung on my arm, suddenly drew the key of the door from his pocket, laid his hand on the lock, hesitated an instant, and asked—"I go without interruption?"

"Certainly; leave the door and the hall free, whoever is there," answered his father, to the persons without. The intruder immediately turned the key; but before he left the room, approached me and said, in tones of perfect sweetness, though they were exhausted, "To you, sir, as the protector of this lady, whoever you are, I offer my sincere apologies for having caused her such distress;" and once more he gazed intently on Bessy's face; and as he at length went out at the door, with his brother, I could hear him whisper—"George, who are they?"

At his preparations to depart, Lord Lintern had rung his bell, and we and the Earl were scarce alone again, when a servant appeared, and quickly returned, at his master's order, with water and wine. My sister had now begun to come to herself, however, without any restoratives; and I only offered her a sip of water, and then

was bearing her towards our fly, with little leave-taking, when his Lordship addressed me.

"I regret it much — I trust your sister will not be the worse of it, sir: is she quite able to be removed?"

"Yes, quite; and the open air and the ride will do her good."

"Very sorry, indeed ——" I had now conveyed Bessy into the hall — "and as to your affair of business, sir, I have heard what you had to say, and you have heard all I can say; your landlord would pay no attention to any remonstrance of mine — I know a little of his character, upon report: were he a tenant or a dependent of mine, indeed, — but as it is, being quite *in*dependent of me, he would turn on his heel and disregard me — so ——"

He had stopped in the middle of the hall; I had proceeded on through the open hall-door, down the steps, into the fly, with Bessy; and at his last words, Master Fox, twice stimulated by my command, whipped Polly and Harriet, and with a formal inclination of the head on both sides, the Earl and I lost sight of each other.

The fresh air and the ride *did* produce a good effect on my poor Bessy, thanks, or rather no thanks, to his Lordship. For some time after her perfect restoration to her senses, she was silent, abstracted, and infectiously sad. Then, broken comments upon the scene which she had witnessed escaped her; and her pure and simple heart sent out expressions of the greatest wonder, that a father and son could so meet, and so speak and act towards one another; and her pity for the son was to me the most interesting, though the least agreeable part of her observations. She was sure he had been ill-treated, in some way or other; she was sure, wicked as he had appeared, people had made him so; she was sure if he had another father — such a father as she had — that he would be a good son; and when I merely asked Bessy how could she tell that? Bessy reddened, and agreed that, indeed, she could not tell it, exactly.

Master Fox seemed awe-stricken, and quite tamed into silence, from the effect of such passages of the transaction as had come under his notice, while he stood with his fly

and steeds near the fine hall-door. I did not try to draw him into conversation till we met the people coming out of the chapel, after the sudden death of the old preacher. My mind was sufficiently engaged to spare him. Under all the excitement of the domestic quarrel I had seen, I certainly could not help saying to myself — and so, because Mr. Wiggins is independent of Lord Lintern — after happening to be too old and too sickly for taking vengeance on him — and because my father and my sister and I are strangers here, and poor ones, — we must let him come poking his head, and croaking like a mad and aged raven, into our window again. To be sure; or how could one call it free and independent England?

As to my afternoon's adventure, like Bessy, I pondered, and wondered, and was mystified, in my own way; and the last and most considerable of my wonderings was — "Am I ever to see or hear of any of those strange people again?"

Good news this morning, dear Graves. A letter from the manager: "Harold" accepted with high eulogiums; the two great tragedians equally pleased with the parts assigned to them, — they, who scarce ever before could be got to accept parts in the same play, — in any, ancient or modern; and rehearsals to be commenced very soon. The tidings have pleased and a little cheered my dear father, and Bessy opens her lustrous, lash-fringed eyes, and smiles in a sort of personal vanity, I believe. I am invited, urged indeed, to run up to town, to be present at one or two rehearsals; you also think that I ought to do so; and I believe I will, and accept, into the bargain, your offer of your chambers, with little Joey's services as a body-man, while you are on circuit. And at the same time I can escort Bessy to pay a long-requested visit to her old London boarding-school mistress, who, it seems, is much in love with her — no wonder, for she has seen her, and become acquainted with her. Poor Bessy resists the arrangement as vigorously as she can, on account of my father's state of health; but my father presses her, in order that she may have a week's amusement; and as he mends a little, I say

nothing to keep her at home; particularly as *I* shall not be more than a few days absent from him.

Dear little Bessy! I am rather uneasy about her. Since our visit to Lord Lintern's she has not been herself. She droops, fidgets, cogitates, and looks pale and red by turns, and is oftener out walking, in lonesome places, either alone, or attended by a follower whom I do not much like—our maid-servant. These are curious domestic details for your eye, but I have always so talked to you, and you to me; and this moment the talking fit is on me. And, by the way, why don't I like Lucy, our maid? I cannot say, but I do not. There is a kind of village mystery of manner about the girl. A cleverness, kept down, I fear; more experience than she pretends to: sectarian prudishness (for, before now, she lived with Mr. Boakes) not always hiding the old leaven, or else the first out-breakings of a different character: all this, to my observation, is in her or about her. She seems, too, a creature of few or none of the attachments of the heart: one who has never experienced them, and who is not likely ever to feel them; although this can scarce be considered as her fault; for she is a workhouse girl, brought up and sent out by the parish, unclaimed by father or mother, or a single relation, and "kept right," that is, overseen by the overseer, whom, although she constrains herself to call him her friend, I know she hates rancorously. Indeed, whenever I have questioned her about any of her old parish governors or governesses, Lucy's utmost caution and self-control were not sufficient to hinder me from seeing that she disliked them all, and was any thing but grateful for the humiliating, the matter-of-course, and despotic benefactions received at their hands. Do poor creatures brought up like her generally feel otherwise? or do they come out into the world with opened and awakened hearts? But I am getting once more into my theories. So, I shall only say that here you have all my whimsies for not liking Bessy's attendant. Yes,—there is another. I have found her talking on the road near our house with the honourable master, who condescended to abase his stolid eyes, a few days ago, upon my sister, in his father's lordly mansion—I mean the young

knight of the whip and the sporting dogs. And the youth has since often rode up and down by our windows; and once, when I mentioned both circumstances to Bessy, she was embarrassed. I recollect, too, that while we spoke, the other day, of the comparative merits of the two brothers, Bessy, in another quandary, admitted that although she had much pitied the violent young man, his junior put forth most personal claims on our notice.

Admitted it, I say? what a word! Does it include the shadow of a doubt of the prudence and good sense of my dear sister? Not the shade of a shadow! No, not as much as would hint to me to abridge a hair's breadth her liberty in the frequent walks she had lately chosen to indulge in. So far as the affair of that visit to the noble magistrate may affect her present moodiness, doubtless she only feels a continuance of the shock and the revulsion then experienced by her delicate nature. And yet——

And yet, Graves, some pages I have here penned must make (after all my promises to the contrary) a part of the portion of the journal which shall not for the present be sent to you.

For want of any thing better to scribble about, listen to our domiciliary proceedings after parting from Mr. Wiggins.

Part from him we did, and from his wife, and from his cob, and from his two gardens, back and front, and from every thing that was his, the morning after my unsatisfactory appeal to my neighbour, Lord Lintern. And to the Anchor we repaired for a few days, where Mr. Moffit again shone upon us. And at length Bessy and I spied out the abode, still more remote than our last, from the sea-houses, where we at present sojourn.

It is a little, half-wooden building, containing two sitting-rooms, four bedchambers, and a kitchen, and it, also, has gardens! to the front and to the rear. Notwithstanding a good deal of creditable contrivance, and brushing, and scrubbing, and polishing, the furniture in it cannot have cost our landlady one hundred and fifty pounds; for, obviously, she has picked it up, here and there, and any

where but in an upholsterer's wareroom. You shall see my view, presently, in saying so much. After my critical observation of chairs and tables, I was curious enough to ascertain what amount of rent and taxes our new proprietress paid. I found that both did not exceed thirty pounds per annum. Very good. Join to that, the yearly interest of one hundred and fifty pounds for furniture — not at the rate of four, five, or even ten per cent., but, if you like, at the rate of twenty per cent. — quite as much, in all conscience, as a Jewess (though our landlady is not one) could fairly ask you for money laid out, but not sunk — that gives another thirty pounds a-year. Rent and taxes, then, and the interest of her furniture-money (at twenty per cent.) make sixty pounds per annum. Now, what has she asked, and what is she paid, for her furnished house? what additional profit does she require on her furniture? Twenty yearly pounds more? What say you to forty — what say you to sixty yearly pounds more? It is the fact. She asks, and insists upon, and gets, and in the present exaggerated state of things can and will get, that unnatural, usurious — worse than usurious — dishonest profit. By incurring a responsibility of thirty pounds a year to her landlord, the king, the parson, and the parish, and by laying out at interest one hundred and fifty pounds, of which the maximum rational yieldings ought to be no more than fifteen pounds a year — and so we must reckon them — this excellent lady contrives to insure to herself an absolute "independence" of seventy-five pounds a year. But then, the village butcher must be paid London prices by her, eightpence and nine-pence a pound for beef, mutton, and veal — to be sure he must, or how could *he* keep two horses, and a cart, to send his boys galloping about the green lanes upon or in, (how disreputable if the steak-fed fellows walked!) and a gig and horse, at least, for himself and wife, on Sundays? or how could he give his daughter ten thousand for her marriage portion? To be sure. And Miss Sutton, our landlady, must she not also dress as well as the squire's lady, having not a shilling in the world but what she makes of her "furnished house," and keep company with the rich brewer's wife; ay, and leave her native

village, — too retired for her taste, during the season, — to visit some more brilliant "watering-place?" Why not?

One word more of her, to satisfy your often expressed cravings.

With many excuses she prayed us, as we had hurried her so much, to allow a town-friend of hers — though once an old neighbour — to spend the evening with her, after we took possession of "the house;" and we were very reluctantly compelled to sit half an hour at her tea-table. The two friends chatted agreeably over many ancient recollections, and now and then upon religious topics; — and while I knew that neither could write a legible hand, or spell a line correctly, or read even their Bible without blundering and stammering, — as I am an accountable agent, I heard one surmise that, of late, she had considered the divinity of the Redeemer with more than usual independence of mind, to get at the truth, and she could no longer bring herself to think him any thing more than man, — though "she didn't deny, a very good man,"— and the other conscientiously and modestly hesitated a little, and sipped her tea, and broke a morsel of her biscuit, and declared that she, too, had thought of the matter in a very independent, truth-seeking spirit, but as yet she could not make herself sure that he might not be something more than merely one of themselves: upon which, superstition was objected to her, in a friendly, anxious way; and it was hoped that she did not continue so wretchedly unassisted as to go kneel down at the table for the parson's bread and wine — and ——

But you have enough, dear Graves. Make your own comments on this veritable anecdote.

At last, dear Graves, after leaving the journal to its repose for a few more jejune days, something has occurred worth noting down for you. Poor Mas'r Moffit! — but I must be methodical.

The fishermen here call the boats which go out to take crabs, horse-boats, or horsers. As I walked along the shingles, at the back of the sea-houses, the other morning, I descried many of these making for shore. It was about

five o'clock. I had been very gravely pondering nothing at all; the shingles were almost deserted; the little incident aroused my interest, and I walked towards the point where I knew the boats would land, just to gape at fishermen who had been out all night (at least) and at crabs, fresh-taken, and all alive, fighting and kicking with one another at the bottom of the boats, and wrenching one another's claws off.

Passing by the rear of the Anchor, I encountered my old friend Moffit, issuing from the inn by a back door. We graciously exchanged salutations. I spoke of the horsers, and said I was going to see them come in. He observed, that, having little better to do, he had the same intention. I began to suspect him of a disloyal purpose, and asked if it ever happened that a lugger met with a horser during the night? He looked too much appealed to, and with much grave earnestness, assured me the thing was impossible. We continued our walk, conversing in a very friendly way.

Some of the boats had run in upon the shingles, as we gained the accustomed touching-point. We stood at one side of a buttress which had been built against a wall near to the shingles, and which, at high tides, often bore a buffet from the breakers. I wondered that the blockade-man, nearest at hand, had not come up, to begin his usual visitation of the horsers. Mr. Moffit gave an expressive though a timid "hem!" and glanced sideways; at the same moment I heard a surly, subdued laugh near us, and following his eye, saw the legs of the individual of whom I had spoken protruding at the other side of the buttress, while he lolled with his back against the wall; and the next moment the man strode to the boats, and entering one, began his prescribed task of searching for contraband articles.

We saw him disappear successively into the confined and smoky holds of more than one boat, when my companion gently declared that he would step aboard the first which the man-of-war's man had visited, and "look up" a good crab or two, for the Anchor. Accordingly, wishing me most politely a good morning, he crawled into

the horser, and, I noted, after regarding and handling a few of the fish, vanished into the hold.

I stood where I was. The blockade-man — a young, ill-favoured, passionate-looking fellow — soon appeared on the edge of the last boat he had had to search, and prepared, his business done, to jump on the shingles. Previous to making his spring, however, he glanced at me, and, I thought — and doubtless I was right — not seeing Mr. Moffit at my side, a cloud of suspicion gathered on his heavy, fleshy forehead. Then he looked round him at the boats, and a second time went down into the hold of one of them.

But not into the right one. Mr. Moffit's head now popped up from its own hold, and turning observantly in all directions, finally encouraged its body and limbs to follow it. Shortly afterwards he gained the land; and, not seeing me, or pretending not to see me, walked with his hands behind his back, in his usual grave and modest pace, towards the Anchor. As I looked after him, I heard a voice cry "Stop!" It was the blockade-man who spoke, once more preparing to jump ashore. My poor friend either did not or would not hear, or else imagined the command had not been intended for him. Again he was challenged, and his challenger hurried after him. I followed; and a tall, broad-chested, athletic lad, dressed in the flannel jacket and waistcoat which denote a working carpenter, walked on at my side.

Mr. Moffit at length stood still, innocently and enquiringly.

"What have you got in your coat-pockets, master?" demanded the man of power.

"Crabs, I protest," answered Moffit, with an appearance of perfect candour.

"Let's see them."

"To be sure; — there's one, and there's another;" drawing one from either pocket.

"Any more?"

"No, I assure you, sir."

"Something else, then;" and the blockade-man ad-

vanced to feel. Old Moffit stepped back, remonstrating, but still not put out of countenance.

" Don't pull the old boy about so," said the young carpenter.

" Best not interfere, you," growled the man-of-war's man, seizing the waiter of the Anchor.

" Run, Mas'r Moffit!" exhorted his ally.

" Stand! you and he, both!" and the braved guardian of the coast collared the operative.

" Now, then, run!" cried the latter, catching the sailor in his arms. While they struggled, Master Moffit certainly endeavoured to stride away. The blockade-man freed an arm, drew a pistol, and calling out — " Back at your peril!" presented it at his young antagonist. I saw a hostile and resolute frown on the lad's brow, and a knitting motion of his right hand, as they glared an instant at one another; but prudence, and, perhaps, a hope that Moffit might escape, taught him better, and, with a flout, and — " pho — what a fuss about nothing!" he gave over his opposition. Then the pursuer was hot in the fugitive's track, still calling out to him to stop. But he was not obeyed; and then I saw smoke and fire, and heard the sharp report of his pistol, baffled by the boom of the sea, and Moffit staggered upon the shingles, and fell. I ran towards him. The blockade-man had come up before me: he knelt on one knee, and was certainly drawing out of the contested pockets sundry small rolls of tobacco. The old man lay motionless upon his face. His captor turned him up; blood came freely from his left breast; the ball had passed through him, and he was quite dead.

Hasty, though low, expressions of, I believe, consternation and regret, escaped his slayer; indeed, I am sure the young man-of-war's man had but yielded to a hasty and ill-tempered impulse when he pulled the trigger of his pistol. I unconsciously echoed his ejaculations, and he looked up into my face, with a conscience-stricken expression of eye, still kneeling over the dead body. The carpenter's voice sounded at our backs.

" There — you've done it," he said.

We both turned to observe him. His formerly ruddy visage was pale, and his comely features worked with a bad manifestation of rising passion. "Yes," he continued, speaking slowly through his teeth, while I thought he was preparing to spring on the blockade-man, "that's your morning's work. You have taken the life of an old man, and the best-liked among us, for the value of as much chaw-weed as would save him his Sunday halfpence. Here, lads," turning to a crowd of fishermen, and other villagers, men, women, and children, who ran up to the spot, "here's poor Mas'r Moffit shot through by a man-of-war's man!"

Exclamations from the fishermen, and groans and shrieks from their wives, and daughters, and children, answered this announcement; and frowning and enraged faces began to close round the offender. He saw his danger, and sprang up from his knee.

"Stop, in your turn!" cried the carpenter-lad, striking him to the shingles again; and he was immediately seized by three or four, and hurried into the midst of the angry crowd.

What were their intentions towards him I cannot say; perhaps they did not themselves know at the moment. But they were huddling him off, amid curses and revilings, when a number of his comrades, detached from the next tower, and headed by a lieutenant, appeared running down some rude steps near the buttress, of which I have before spoken; while two or three others, sentinels along the coast, also hurried to the scene of dispute.

The Lieutenant's voice was heard commanding the people to desist, and yield up their prisoner. He was not, to appearance, a favourable specimen of, generally speaking, the gallant and gentlemanlike officers of the British navy. Though not, perhaps, more than forty, his person was corpulent; and his coarse face, and especially his nose, hinted frequent intercourse with the brandy-bottle. I will not vouch that he was quite sober that moment; certainly he was not cool and temperate enough for the occasion, for neither his tones, his looks, nor his gesticula-

tion, showed any sympathy with poor Moffit's fate, nor with the natural feelings of the villagers.

"Stand still, all of you, or my men shall fire!" he cried, coming near to the crowd. Looks and whispers were interchanged among them, and the next instant they did stand still. "What's all this?" he continued, giving one hasty glance at the corpse.

The young carpenter stepped out as spokesman, with his own account of the outrage, adding, "Your man has murdered one of the most harmless old creatures among us, and we only want to have him up before a magistrate."

"I am sorry for what has happened," said the prisoner, "and declare I did not intend to take life, though, if I had, my duty would bear me out in it;" and he informed his officer that Moffit had had contraband articles concealed on his person, would not submit to be searched, and was escaping, while he, the speaker, was attacked by an accomplice; and he directed attention to the carpenter, on whom the Lieutenant immediately bent an angry look, and then asked,—

"Are the contraband articles still on his person?"

"No, sir, I seized them when he fell."

"Produce them."

The blockade-man was still surrounded by the people; he demanded to have his arms freed; they assented, but did not permit him to join his comrades. He put his hand in the bosom and in the pockets of his jacket alternately, and replied, "Sir, they have been taken from me."

A groan of denial and accusation escaped his captors, and the young carpenter said, "You never had no such things in your possession."

"Search *him*," resumed the prisoner.

"Jigger me, if he do!" cried the lad, stepping back and mixing with his friends.

"Well then, sir, ask that 'ere gentleman about the whole of it;" and the slayer of old Moffit pointed to me.

The Lieutenant immediately asked me if I had witnessed the transaction. I found myself placed in a disagreeable situation; few of the village friends of Moffit felt, I

believe, more indignation than myself at his death, and against the whole system which warranted the taking away a fellow-creature's life on such slight grounds as sufficed for his assassination ; hence, my first feeling was unwillingness to say a word in favour of the man-of-war's man. I also thought, in prudence, that I ought not, by so doing, to insure to myself the general and, perhaps, dangerous hostility of the people among whom I had temporarily taken up my abode.

Therefore I hesitated at the Lieutenant's question. He pressed it ; very properly reminding me of the necessity of giving any evidence that would set the unhappy affair in its true light, and adding, that present unwillingness to speak out could not avail me upon a probable future occasion. His words had effect, as also had my own awakened sense of justice ; and, at length, in guarded answers to his repeated questions, I admitted that I had seen the young sailor draw out of the pockets of the deceased the articles in debate.

" That 's enough," said the officer, " my man has done nothing but his duty. Release him, at your peril ! " addressing the people.

The men of the crowd held a sullen silence, the women and children renewed their cries, and a shriek more fearful than any of theirs, — that of the wife of the dead man, — now reached us from a distance.

" At your peril ! " resumed the Lieutenant, and he drew his cutlass.

" Ay, kill as many more of us, as you like," said a voice, which I thought was that of the now concealed carpenter ; " but let the women and children go home, first, — don't kill them too."

I began to fear horrible consequences, particularly as the shrieks of the newly-made widow, now coming nearer, had the natural effect of rousing still more the enraged people. Acting upon a sudden thought, I asked a parley of the Lieutenant, before he could reply to the threat and the insult directed against him. He allowed me to speak with him apart. I represented the idea that had come

into my mind, and to my great relief, he adopted it, after an instant's demur only.

"Harkye," he said, "yield up the man to be examined before his officers, in the first place, and I pledge my word that if he shall be found to have acted improperly, in the least degree, he shall be handed over to civil authority: observe, likewise, I have the right, and the power, too, to secure the person of the accomplice of the old smuggler who attacked my man-of-war's man in the execution of his duty, and also to search him, and all of you, for the contraband articles plundered by some one of your number; yet I will give up both these points, at some risk to myself, if you at once obey my first command."

I joined my entreaties to the officer's less supplicating tone; pointed out to them the good sense of the course proposed; reminded them that they could do nothing against the law of the land, while that law would be sure to protect itself; and, in fact, their reasoning, English minds, were enough worked upon by the two appeals made on the part of the officer and myself, to allow me to advance within their circle, and, upon a repeated understanding of full justice to be done, lead their prisoner to his comrades, just an instant before Mrs. Moffit broke through them, in an opposite direction, and flung herself upon the body of her husband.

The liberated man was quickly marched off to his tower, guarded by his mates, and preceded by his officer, who touched his cap to me; and while the fishermen prepared to bear poor old Moffit's corpse to his wife's house, obstructed by her violent cries and actions, I ascended the steps near the buttress, and walked home, through waving fields, my back turned to the sea.

In the course of the day, I received a summons to attend a coroner's inquest on the body. Now I was compelled to give full evidence of the whole transaction; and after I had deposed that the old smuggler had certainly refused to be searched, and was running off, while the carpenter secured the blockade-man, the jury, under the direction of the coroner, returned such a verdict as left the

latter a free and unquestioned person in the eyes of the law. I must remark that the jury was composed of the more respectable inhabitants of the village and its neighbourhood, among whom were some individuals of absolute rank, so that the angry prepossessions of the lower classes little interfered with their judgment of the case.

But it was easy to see that the verdict did not satisfy many others of the inhabitants of the village. Faces that I had noticed on the beach, in the morning, were in the room when it was delivered, and, although no murmurs arose, I could perceive their deep disappointment and wrath, as they turned communicatively their watchful eyes upon one another. As I sauntered out, after the investigation, groups in the street, or by the sea's edge, also conveyed to my mind a similar dissatisfaction, as they whispered together, sometimes raising slightly, but stamping energetically their feet into the sand or amongst the stones and pebbles, or shaking their bent heads as if to their own rising determinations.

I returned to the sea-houses, in the evening, and observed similar signs of excitement through the whole village: in addition to which, a little crowd attracted my notice at the door of Mrs. Moffit's house. I looked on observantly. Presently, the widow, supported by some female neighbours, came out, and took their way to the shingles. The crowd of men, lads, and children followed them. I did not stay behind, though I kept my distance. All proceeded towards Lieutenant Hood's tower — Hood being the name of my acquaintance of the morning. Arrived near the edge of the deep and wide dry fosse, lined with smooth and massive mason-work, which encompasses it, and cuts off all communication, except by a movable wooden bridge, from the main-land, Mrs. Moffit asked to speak with the officer. The blockade-man of whom she made this demand disappeared, without a word, through a low, square doorway, into the tower.

Lieutenant Hood soon was visible at the same spot. Mrs. Moffit required to know what decision he and his brother officers had come to upon the man who had shot her husband: she was answered carelessly, and as if a

case of no importance were in discussion, that the man's officers, as well as the coroner's jury, could find no fault with him. He was not, then, to be given up for examination before a magistrate? Flouting the idea, the Lieutenant retired; and with an expressively muttered "Very well," from almost every lip, Mrs. Moffit, her companions and followers, slowly returned to the village.

Next morning, I met Lieutenant Hood near his tower. He saluted me, and we entered into conversation: of course the late occurrences formed our topic. He spoke bluffly of the obstinacy of the people of the place, and assured me that, the night before, every watch on the coast, up and down, for miles, had been overlooked by men from the village, in the hopes, he believed, of finding the individual, who, only in obedience to orders, had been unfortunate enough to shoot the old smuggler. "We had as close an eye upon them as they had upon us," he continued, "and were prepared for any foolish violence they might have attempted; though, as we knew they were bent on only a particular business, I had little fear of disagreeable results; that is, of being compelled to do *my* duty; for, long before they stole out to us, the man in question had been stolen off, to a remote point of the coast, for peace-sake."

"Do you wish them to be made acquainted with this fact?" I enquired.

"To be sure, sir," he answered, "it was not intended as a secret, in the daylight, this morning; and you may do some good by helping to spread the little piece of news."

We parted, and I availed myself of the permission given me. I got into conversation with two or three fishermen on the shingles, and told them what I had just heard. Others came up while I spoke. I had hoped to see their excitement allayed, or at least diverted by the intelligence. Such, however, was not the case, to all appearances. On the contrary, I thought their brows grew blacker, after their first surprise, and that they stealthily glanced at each other with increased, though still suppressed, indignation. I tried to make it appear that the prompt removal from among them of an obnoxious individual, when he might

have been continued on his post, after the decision of the coroner's jury, was a proof of attention to their feelings, and to those of the friends of the deceased: but the men only smiled darkly, or shook their heads; or some of them, affecting indifference, turned off, whistling, to look idly upon the sea.

Two days have since elapsed, and, to my view, the passions of the people seem to work as deeply as ever. Old Moffit is not yet buried; and our maid Lucy informs me that, contrary to English custom, the body is visited, hourly, by crowds, some of whom are strangers, as it lies exposed in its coffin, the blood ostentatiously left on the articles of dress stripped off it, after death. I can also hear allusions, as I pass along the street, from women and children, of "what a funeral he is to have;" and this moment, three ballad singers have passed our windows, two men and a woman, croaking and screaming forth a lamentable song of my poor old friend's "murder," burdened with hostility and curses against his Majesty's revenue and the blockade service.

And having written so far, dear Graves, I send you off my sheets, for your edification. If any thing else occur of a remarkable nature, you shall hear of it quickly. I make no theories now.

Your letter, in acknowledgment of my last despatch, has just come to hand. So, you knew of our little row here, almost as soon as you had an account of it from me? And of all people in the world, your brother ran up to town with the outline of it to you, before posting down to us, from the other side of the coast, to take command of Lieutenant Hood's tower? Well; I do think this arrangement very wise on the part of those who have made it. As long as Hood remained here, either he or our fishermen (smugglers), or both, must have been in danger of suffering or committing new outrage.

I am obliged to you for your letter to your sea-brother, for me. Since you like him, so I am sure shall I. Let him come!

This is the fourth day after old Moffit's death; and al-

though the people do not look as angry and as excited, I believe they still indulge some wayward plans of retaliation. I have a second time met Lieutenant Hood, and he seems of my opinion. But he and his men, he adds, are on their guard, without condescending, however, to evince any consciousness to the eyes of the villagers. He also says, that whatever may be the popular disposition to violence, there is little fear of its becoming matured into acts without the presence, or at least the proximity, of Lilly White; and the Lieutenant has been authentically advised that the homely and common-place hero mentioned is at present in the Channel, watching his time for running in his lugger. We shall see. I expect a call from your brother to-morrow.

Mutford's journal may here be interrupted for a while. In order to supply information where he could only make conjectures, pains have been taken to induce the confidence of individuals of the humble community regarding whom he has been writing; and though this was found no very easy task, yet, in the first instance, much of the following has resulted from it.

The red-brick houses of which he has spoken did not present to the eye an uniform row. Here and there, between them, appeared very poor cottages, built of wood, and covered with tiles, the abodes of fishermen, or of shopkeepers of the humblest grade. We enter one of those, the day after Mutford wrote in his journal the last extract made from it.

It is a fisherman's house. He is out of doors, in the Tap, or else talking with some neighbours on the shingles. His wife, a tall, genteel-faced woman, of a tasty style of dress, and respectable manners, sits at her geranium-shaded window, wearing spectacles, though not more than forty, to assist her in going through the repairs of a pile of tattered and torn garments, male and female, and all belonging to little people, which lie on a deal table before her. Some of the owners of them, that is, four or five, are scrambling, and rolling, at play, on the tiled floor near her feet; two or three more, of riper years, are running in and out at the open street door of this, the only sitting apart-

ment of her house, carrying on against her a war which some recent remonstrances on her part has given rise to; one pops in a moment, and having said—"Blow you, our mother!" he shoots off again; another takes his place to address to her even less respectful language; and a moment before our entrance, she had just sat down to resume her work, after pursuing the young rebels half way up to the Anchor, with the handle of a hair-broom in her hand. A few more of her fish-fed offspring are disporting themselves by the edge of a wide ditch, at the opposite side of the street; and at each frequent splash into the sedgy water, she starts up in the certainty that for the third or fourth time, that day, she shall have to fly out, and bring home, by the waistband of his little breeches, or by the skirts of her scanty frock, Watt, or Jane, or Georgy, or Jemima, soused like gurnets.

And all this while she contrives to join in the conversation of three friends, who sit at a second deal-table, in the opposite corner of her little apartment, drinking brandy and water, with which, though she has taken out no licence, the good woman can supply them at will.

One of these persons is the husband of the poor landlady of whom Mutford, his father, and sister at first had lodgings. The expression of the man's face is disagreeably sottish, his frame is powerfully and symmetrically knit, his dandily-cut clothes are worn in a lazy and vulgar manner; he is the most silent of the party, and his hoarse and croaking voice, when he does speak a few sulky words, would induce no one to wish him less taciturn.

The next toper is a young man of an agreeable cast of face, with great earnestness in conversation, to which a stutter gives additional expression. He drives a van, of which he is the proprietor, from the village to a town some dozen miles off; and he just drew up four hours ago to ask Missis Simmons for one glass of her cheap brandy, when, finding agreeable company under her roof, he was tempted to linger a little while, and then a little while longer, until, at length, here he is, in the dusk of the evening, his van still standing at her door utterly neglected, if not forgotten, and standing a chance of standing there for yet another

hour to come, and then of being driven back to its shed rather than upon its lawful business of the day.

The third of Mrs. Simmons's guests, under the rose, is announceable as Butcher Fell, or Preacher Fell, indifferently. He has his Bible by heart, but never repeats it so perfectly as after he has been in Mrs. Simmons's house, or else in the Tap for an hour or two at a time. He is to be encountered every Sunday morning at six or seven o'clock, on the road to a near village, reverently habited in black clothes and top-boots, going to preach to a little primitive congregation who eagerly expect his weekly visit. The top-boots have been redeemed from pledge overnight, out of the hands of Mrs. Simmons, or some other accommodating neighbour, who has had possession of them since the previous Monday morning, and is sure to see their faces again early upon the morrow. A well-featured woman, who is not his wife, although he has been married and is no widower, walks by his side on these occasions, carrying a basket filled with edibles, and surmounted by a black bottle or two. He cannot rank higher than as the third or fourth rate butcher of the village, and, now sitting before us, wears only his greasy hat, his blue round frock, and a pair of heavy buskins.

The conversation between these good people had unavoidably commenced with the one great absorbing topic of the week, namely, the death of old Mas'r Moffit; and in the free range of its discussion was comprehended sufficient abuse of men-of-war's men, officers and all, and of every one who aided and abetted, invented and upheld them; and Mrs. Simmons, in her own quiet respectable way, took her share in the discourse, for she had her reasons.

Presently, however, Butcher Fell made a short turn into what he considered parallel grievances, and he called certain persons and personages drones of the hive; and anon instituted a happy comparison between them and the blockade-men; showing, that as the latter guarded the waters of the sea, to hinder honest people from getting now and then the comfort of a good drop of cheap liquor, the former acted the same part upon the shores of the waters of life, keeping off from our souls the nourishment they stood so much in need of, or not letting it ashore un-

less it had paid a duty, and a tax, and a tithe, which not only made it too dear for humble purchasers, but had the effect of adulterating its quality, and turning it into a deleterious draught.

The young van-driver, Bowers by name, vehemently stuttered out his more than acquiescence in this reasonable doctrine, adding, that it was but too true, "every word Cobbett had writ" on the subject, in his book called the History of the Reformation. At this Butcher Fell took fire, and reprehended Cobbett as a story-telling Papist, quite as warmly as he had discountenanced more venerable individuals; and hence grew a stormy debate between the two speakers.

A stranger might have been surprised to hear the precision with which Bowers detailed, notwithstanding his stutter and the force added to it by Mrs. Simmons's hospitality, the state of church-property before the Reformation, and in particular its partial appropriation to the poor, so as to leave people free of poor-rates—all conned out of Cobbett;—(it may be noticed that the volume he has written on these matters is in the hands of many a village politician;) but Butcher Fell, his incalculable rancour against the name of Papist having fully possessed him, would take nothing on the authority quoted; would not permit Cobbett to find fault with any thing or any body; would not believe a word out of his mouth; and, in consequence, he naturally began to defend whatever that well-known writer had attacked, and thus unsay, one after the other, his own recent charges against the established religion of these realms.

The dandy sot of the party was appealed to by both the disputants. He indolently pronounced the whole matter, "at one side and the t'other, gammon, and nothing else."

"Ay, Will Brown, to you it be, and to all like you, what don't believe in a God, or in a devil," said Butcher Fell, bitterly.

"Preacher Fell, you be a fool, and so that's at an end," resumed Will Brown; "who do you think is to stop here listening to your purring, purring, from morning till night, from night to morning? I say, Miss's Simmons, the

bottle be as empty as some people's heads; leave off, Mas'r Bowers, I tell you, and let's think of business. Miss's—where be Martha Huggett staying so long? Let me talk now, Mas'r Fell, me and Miss's Simmons, together; for I be jiggered if I'll stand no more of your preaching—eh, Miss's?"

"Never mind, Mas'r Brown, Martha won't be long behind her time," replied Mrs. Simmons.

"Then, what's that you was a-saying, Miss's, about t'other trade, and your losses, just now? Tell us that, while we be waiting for her."

"Ah, as I'm a living woman, Mas'r Brown, sitting here before you this precious moment, the times afore the blockade-men came were the times for me, and all of us, as you know very well. Long life to Bonyparte, and I hope we'll see him again. Many a Sunday, on my way to Mr. Hugh's chapel, across the marshes, I knowed where to find as good as a hundred pounds' worth of light articles, made up so nice to my hand that I could sit out the best lecture that precious man ever gave us, side by side with Miss's Turner from the custom-house, and never afraid as what she could guess the contents of my pockets. No, the riding officers didn't give us no trouble worth talking of. It's these men-o'-war's men what keeps us as poor as we are, with their pistols at our heads every hand's turn, and watching us so close that there's no such thing as turning an honest penny for ourselves or our little 'uns. And the whole world will never make me think but what it was one of 'em, dressed up like a gentleman's servant, what informed against me, the time that the two London men walked into my house, in the middle of the noonday, and went straight to every hole and corner where I had a single thing, the same as if they had seen me going about the house twenty times—ah, Will Brown, that was the day I broke; three hundred pounds' worth I had under the roof, and in my pockets, and three hundred more they fined me. But here's Jack Simmons, and news in his face. Well, Mas'r Simmons," as her thickset, broad-shouldered husband entered, somewhat agitated, (that is, for him,) "what's in the wind now?"

"Will Brown," said her spouse, "we're a-going to lose the man-o'-war's man afore his time be up among us."

"What's that?" asked Brown, rousing himself.

"A post-chaise drove up to the Anchor, as I came by, and a new lieutenant jumped out of it — any one can tell what's *that*."

"'Tis easy following t'other," and Brown relapsed into his indolent manner.

"Not so far as he'll go," observed Mrs. Simmons; "they won't leave him on this side of England."

"He can't get off for to-night, at any rate," resumed her husband, "and so let the old man be earthed at once: that's my mind."

"Where be the friends he expects at his funeral, Mas'r Simmons?" demanded the smuggling landlady; "you know the evening was fixed for after to-morrow, and fixed for the two jobs together, and so, people bayn't at hand."

"I'll wait till Martha Huggett steps in, before I say *my* mind," grumbled Will Brown, "so, there's an end of that; and they swore you, Miss's Simmons, didn't they, never to buy or sell a single thing that hadn't paid the King's duty?" he continued, alluding to the story of her losses which Mrs. Simmons had been telling, before the appearance of her husband.

"Me and Jack Simmons together, Mas'r Brown, in as hard oath as ever they could think of."

Brown gave a chuckle, though a lazy and sullen one, as he helped himself to a proof of Mrs. Simmons's faithful observance of those hard oaths. It is remarkable, that in her indirect avowal of deliberate perjury, there was not a shade of self-accusation, nor yet of bravado. She seemed to have lived all her life in an atmosphere of opinions which attached no moral guilt to the act, but, on the contrary, regarded it as one of the inevitable, matter-of-course occurrences of her trade; rather disagreeable and inconvenient, to be sure, but that was not her fault, but the sin of those who would not let her earn her bread in her own way.

"Well, here be Martha, at last," resumed Brown, as the person he spoke of came in. She was a girl of about

twenty-three, not tall, well-featured, with a ruddy complexion, her figure more neat (almost genteel) than attractive, in a certain sense, and her attire — a coloured frock, a second-hand black silk spencer, and close straw bonnet — tidy and precise. The moment she stepped over the threshold of the door, Martha stopped short, and cast round her a glance peculiarly observant and intelligent.

"There be a girl *can* hold her tongue, if need be," continued Will Brown.

"Good evening, Miss's Simmons," she said, ending her scrutiny; "always stitching and contriving for the little 'uns: I wish I had time to sit down with you and patch a hole or run up a slit in one of those trousers or frocks;" and she seated herself.

"Obleeged to you, all the same, my maid," replied her friend; "hard at work all day, I warrant?"

"Till a moment afore I whipped up my bonnet for a run to see you; families keep coming down to us, now, day after day, and the iron be never out of the fire, in our house, that it bayn't in my hand."

"Not the only one you have in the fire, old girl," observed Brown.

"Hard work, indeed, Martha," continued Mrs. Simmons; "but it pays you; it will be a bad week for you, the rest of the season, that you don't clear a couple of sovereigns, *I* know."

"Why, yes, Miss's, one week with another."

"To say nothing of t'other trade," mumbled Brown.

"Mas'r Brown, you be a fool, I tell you," said Martha, "and of an odd time don't rightly know what you 're a-saying."

"Well, my maid," resumed Mrs. Simmons, with a sigh, as she made several attempts to thread her needle, in the increasing twilight; "not a girl or woman among us makes up clothes tidier or nicer than you, and that's why you deserve your two sovereigns a week, *I* say; though the half of that seldom comes into this house now-a-days, put every earthly thing together that Jack and myself can do; his fishing, and my going into the sea with the lady-bathers, and the odd tub, now and then, and all; ay, not

forgetting thripence a day each, earned by Watt and Jem, picking stones in Mas'r Martin's fields;" she spoke of two little fellows of seven and six, who, instead of being at school, or in any other situation, for improving themselves, worked, indeed, under the rigorous inspection of the farmer named, twelve hours a day for sixpence between them.

"Miss's, you be talking precious nons'ns," said Jack Simmons, as he took a stride towards Martha Huggett, from the middle of the tiled floor, where he had been standing moodily, his hands thrust into the pockets of his loose trousers; "and more than that, you be keeping Martha here, from ——"

"Me, Mas'r Simmons?" interrupted the girl, "nobody keeps me from nothing;" and she turned her face quickly to the dark corner, in which, with his head resting on his hands, upon the table, Preacher Fell had fallen fast asleep.

"You don't know him?" demanded Simmons.

"Why, it be only Mas'r Fell, the poor stoopid, and a-snoring, too, or going to begin."

"Oh, only he? all's right then, if he was broad awake," resumed Martha; "and nobody overhead, Miss's Simmons?"

Mrs. Simmons assured her not.

"Where be Jane?" she continued, meaning her friend's eldest daughter, a girl of fourteen.

"Out by the sea, carrying baby, for a walk."

"Well then;" Martha paused a moment.

"Well then," repeated Brown, "there be a new lieutenant come to Hood's tower, old girl, and Hood's off."

"Not to-night," said Martha Huggett.

"To-morrow, then, at fard'st."

"No, nor to-morrow, Mas'r Brown."

"Very well: 't is you I believe; but who told you?"

"Theirselves told me. I came round by the tower, for a run, coming here, and seed 'em meeting on the clift; and then I sat behind Mas'r Hall's hedge to let 'em pass by, and they walked close to me, and were a-talking."

"That will do," said Simmons.

"Yes, if to-morrow evening will do, instead of the evening after, for burying Mas'r Moffit," resumed Brown.

"Ye must make it do," said Martha.

"P'raps—supposing you get round to *that side*, after dark, my maid," observed Simmons.

"And won't I?—but who is to give the word to the Rye and Hastings men, that the time's changed? They must be looked after, t' other way from round by that side, you know."

No one answered her. "Mas'r Bowers!" she went on; and the van proprietor started in his chair, and opened his blinking eyes, which were fast following the example of Butcher Fell's.

"'Tisn't the first time you met us all, with the van, Mas'r Bowers, by a short cut, hard by the Three Williams, over the clift."

"N—n—no!" assented Bowers, vehemently.

"And you know all what's in the wind now?"

"Ye—e—"

"Yes, to be sure you do. Then listen to me. There's your van, again, doing nothing, at the door, and you a-helping of it, going a-sleep at that table; stir yourself, and whip it off towards where you know; and try and get out one word among the people what be a-coming to see us: no one will never suspect nothing of you no more than of myself; you follow your lawful calling, though if a marked man goes that road, 'twould be another thing: be you moving, yet? I'll be round that side—the t'other from yours—afore long, and see some one what often paid you for a job—and paid you well, too."

With alacrity of limb, though tardy expressions of readiness, Bowers arose, walked pretty steadily out of the house, mounted his van, and disappeared with it from the door.

Martha Huggett then shook Butcher Fell by the shoulder, and when he could comprehend her, asked, "A-preaching as usual, to-morrow morning, Mas'r Fell?"

"The Lord's work——" he began: she interrupted him to say that, under the circumstances, it would do to have the friends he was going amongst get a hint, early in the morning, and he was appointed to speak with them, after or before his sermon, just as he liked, provided he would

be sure to speak to the purpose. He accepted the mission. Martha then exhorted him to get up and go home and sleep, in order to prepare himself for early rising. This advice he also adopted, and was staggering slightly to the door, when she added, "The two jobs—remember that," at which Preacher Fell sagely nodded his head and departed.

"Now, you and I be ready for going round by that side, old girl," muttered Brown.

"No, Will, we bayn't—one of us, at least," answered Martha Huggett authoritatively.

"And which of us be that one, Martha?"

"Me, if you go; you, if I go."

"Meaning that you won't take me with you?"

"Just so."

"And why won't you?"

"Because I wun't, Will Brown; and for two reasons, besides: I don't like you 'nough to be alone with you out by the clift; and though you mayn't think it, Mas'r Will, people begins to ask one another how you go so fine, and keep your setters and your gun, and give your mind to nothing but brandy and water in Miss's Simmons's house, or to London porter at the Tap, while Miss's Brown hasn't over and above too much in her own house at home; and so, Will, I don't think you could pass the men-o'-war's men, going round to that side, without they turning to look after you; and that's why you can't and shan't walk at my elbow to-night, when so much is at hap-hazard, and to be done, if ever it was done, on the sly."

"Then go alone, old girl."

"No, I wun't—not that, neither. Jane Simmons," as the girl entered with her youngest brother asleep in her arms, "be you coming out for a walk?"

"Which way?" demanded Jane, interested.

"Why, up to the old mill, first, suppose; and then by Mas'r Yielding's garden-wall, you know"—Jane tittered—"and then, any where at all, home again. There—come along—put baby in mother's lap—there—Mas'r Brown, you may walk with us as far as the old mill—no one will never suspect you, so far"—she continued, whispering

him — " and you can give the word to the folk what will be waiting for it there, about this time, just to keep Jane from seeing or hearing too much: — so, here we go:" — speaking loud again, " Night, Miss's — night, Mas'r Simmons — I 'll bring Jane home safe to you," and taking the girl's arm, she left the house, obediently followed by the lazily striding Brown.

" I be blow'd, Miss's, but that 'ere be as clever a hand as any what Lilly White has in pay," observed the master of the house to his wife, with whom, excepting the baby and three or four infants, he was now left alone.

" 'T is you I believe, Mas'r Simmons," she replied; " and nothing in this world will never make me think but what he gives Martha Huggett more of his mind, ay, and of his money, too, than he gives to any other body among you."

" Well, and if so, she earns and deserves it. I be not over-sure he could keep up t'other trade at all without the help of some one like her, what nobody never has a thought of, and what can beat the oldest of us at doing a thing on the sly, as she says herself. How she manages to blind even our Jane, Miss's, for as many times as they went out together: talking to her of Bill Yielding, and all that 'ere stuff, to keep her head at work on its own account."

" And don't you like the girl, Mas'r Simmons, for getting Jane, or any other great girl at hand, to go out with her, just to hinder any one from saying that she met this man or that boy, by the clift, alone? Did you hear her at Will Brown, to-night? I be blessed, but I was glad she gave it t'him. And how many girls of her years, do you think, could go among men and boys, of every sort, and at all hours, and in all places, and keep them off, and keep her own character, to this precious hour, without a blemish, Mas'r Simmons?"

" I don't know, I'm sure; but I be blow'd if you bayn't be going to talk cruel nons'ns, over again, Miss's," answered her husband, walking out of his house with his head poked down, and his hands in his trousers pockets.

Meantime, Martha Huggett, Jane Simmons, and Will Brown, proceeded from the sea-side down towards the

village where dwelt Mutford, his father and sister. They passed it, continued a little way by the high road, and then over paths through fields, to another village, but a much smaller and poorer one. That also they cleared, and began to ascend a rugged and imperfectly seen track, up an uncultivated hill, which, however, was covered with the short, tender herbage that sheep love, and that makes men and women love to eat sheep, because they have loved and eaten *it*. Upon the brow of this hill appeared indistinctly — for it was now as dark as a moonless summer night generally is — a jumble of the ruins of an old building.

"Up with you," whispered Martha to Brown, "and if you find all right, cry out to us — 'Girls, go home!' I must bring all the news I can with me where I'm going — Jane and I will stop here a moment."

He parted from them. "I wonder where Mas'r Brown be a-going to, now, Jane," continued Martha to her companion, "and leave us standing here; — on no good, either for his-self or poor Miss's Brown, I warrant: — there, I told you!" — as Brown's signal words met her ear: — "I be blessed and made happy, Jane, if he ha'n't come here to meet Lucy Peat, or one of her like! Come along, my pretty maiden, let's run back by Bill Yielding's."

So saying, Martha caught Jane's hand, and galloped with her down the hill, both laughing. Retracing their steps, they repassed the little village, and were soon tripping by the gardener's, Mas'r Yielding. Martha stopped at the open door of the cottage, and asked, "Be Bill at home?" though she well knew he wasn't. The old father came out, and answered her. "Oh, very well; we know where to find him, then, up the clift. Let he and you have the pit open, in the garden, about eleven, to-morrow night," she whispered. "So, now for it, Jane!"

They struck across fields and marshes straight for the coast. After ascending gradually, the land flattened, and the fresh breeze on their foreheads told them that they were near the edge of the cliffs. A few yards more, straight on, brought them to the path by their line, and now the girls pursuing it faced in the direction whither Mutford had walked, as described in his journal. Their

course was, however, unvaryingly, by the cliffs. They saw more than one blockade-man, pacing slowly, or standing still, upon the solitary shingles under them, and passed more than one upon their own path; and on these occasions Martha Huggett contrived to be talking and laughing girlishly with her young companion, or singing: —

"'Twas on the morn of sweet May-day,
When nature painted all things gay,
Gave birds to sing, and lambs to play,
And deck'd the meadows fair —
Young Jocky with the morn arose,
And tript it lightly o'er the lawn;
The youth put on his Sunday clothes,
For Jenny had vow'd away to run
With Jocky to the fair!

For Jenny had vow'd away to run
With Jocky to the fair!"

They walked and ran a good distance, ascending and descending with the rise and fall of the cliff. They paused upon the verge of an abrupt chalk pit, of which the depths were hid from their view, owing to the inequality of the various excavations.

"I'll try for him here, Jane," said Martha: "you stop where you are, as the path is not easy, and you don't know it as well as I do."

"Why, what would bring him down there?" demanded Jane.

"I think he heard me say that you and I might come so far for a run to-night — so, stand still, a moment."

She ran down the precipitous side of the first excavation, digging into the chalk with her heels. Jane soon lost sight of her, as she continued her descent to the depths of the pit. Arrived at her point, Martha stared in surprise at the young carpenter whom Mutford had seen on the shingles. He was the only person visible.

"Only you here, Sam Geeson!" she whispered.

"Only me, old girl; and I don't think you'll see any one else to-night: Lilly seems as if he were going to be frightened a bit."

"Any sign of him?" continued Martha, peering in-

quisitively at the sea, out through an opening in the top line of the chalk pit.

"You'll get none, now," replied Geeson; "though I do think I saw him in the fog, about two hours ago."

"Let's talk to him:"—Martha drew some tow from her pocket; shook spirits of turpentine over it, out of a small phial; struck a light in a little tinder-box; set fire to a match, and touched the match to a portion of the tow, which she placed on the edge of the pit.

"That says *when*," she resumed, "and this will say *where*," and she ignited the second portion of the tow. "And now, Sam, good night; and don't give up yet: he may slip off a boat after this."

"But I say, Martha," growled Sam, in a way which he meant to be coaxing.

"And what *do* you say?" She was hastening up the pit.

"You'll stay and talk a bit, won't you, now?"

"All nonsense, Sam Geeson, with me—and I 've told you as much afore: good night, and mind your look-out." And she was soon by Jane's side.

Mutford in continuation.

From some place I do not know—

——Nor your brother Alexander either, dear Graves, who is in it along with me. And we are prisoners, closely watched, though, I will own, not badly treated. Nay, *I* don't care how long they hold me in durance—provided they have kept their word with me as to conveying a note to my father—so pleasing, so soothing, has been one circumstance connected with my loss of liberty. And I believe in my heart, that, but for his shame and impatience of his late discomfiture, and his ardour to be again engaged in his duties, your brother could pass a very agreeable bondage of a few weeks at my side; for this moment, as I glance up from my writing, I see him seated in the recess of an old-fashioned window, smiling and chatting most contentedly with one of our hostesses, or gaolers, or keepers—a pretty and engaging girl of eighteen or thereabouts. Our first prison-house has, indeed, been of a

worse description. But do I not rather tantalise you? I hope so. And to make amends, you shall have as methodical an explanation as my sense of order and of events in series can supply.

In the twilight of the evening after I last journalised for you, I was stepping out of our furnished house, when a young naval officer met me at the door and enquired for myself. I knew him at once, though he is not a bit like you. We smiled at each other, as he put your note into my hand; and that smile went a good way in breaking down the barriers of formality between us. The next moment we were upstairs with my father and Bessy, claimaints upon the evening hospitality of the latter; and my little sister, recovering from a momentary fright, bustled about us with more energy and good-humour than she has lately shown to her own friends exclusively.

I do like him, dear Graves, very much: he seems born and informed for his most manly and straightforward profession, and in any situation of society must inevitably be taken as an excellent specimen of it. Frankness without display, without as much as consciousness; bluntness, without a jot of rudeness; nature, without a jot of uncouthness; these are his more considerable characteristics, discernible at a glance; in fact, he is a gentleman, though not of a coterie, a college, or a club-room. Then his humour is heart-cheering, though I do not remember his saying one *good thing*, as they call it: it cheers his own heart, and, of natural necessity, the hearts of others; and although so young,—scarce twenty, I should suppose, and believe I have heard you say,—there yet surrounds all this, bracing and keeping it together, a solid good sense, of which many of my acquaintance of treble his age stand in need. And, by the way, Graves, with that gallant, tall, symmetrical figure of his, and that ingenuous glowing face, —(how lavish is nature to *some* of her children!)—I should call Alexander a dangerous invader of the female peace of heart of the drawing-room. My life upon it, he would annihilate three sons of Stultz in half an evening.

So, you see, we must have chatted and laughed to some purpose over Bessy's tea-table, scantily attended as it was

by our solitary Lucy Peat, to allow of time and opportunity for my seeing and thinking all this about the new acquaintance you have introduced to us. And, indeed, we did; and I have not known even my father so cheerful this long while.

Well, but all this is not what you want; or do I think you ignorant of the features of your brother's character or face, down to the present hour? Patience: our evening's conversation did not close without allusions to the death of old Moffit; and I began to love your brother for condemning heartily the rashness and intemperance of the man-of-war's-man, and the bungling bluffness and badness of Hood's deportment on the occasion, at the same time that he hinted good-humoured yet contemptuous dislike of the blockade service, as one strange and unfit for people who had at least seen Algiers in a seventy-four.

The interest I had taken in the recent occurrences prompted me to express, indirectly, a hope that Lieutenant Hood would not remain long in his martello-tower. Your brother bluntly replied that he had asked to be left in it for that night, but would surrender it next morning, and the village in the course of the day. "I am sorry he does not repair to his new station without a moment's delay, if it were possible," your brother continued, "after what has happened, and since the people seem so angry with him."

Here ended our interview for the night; but at parting Alexander asked me to dine with him the following day, and I gladly accepted the invitation, after glancing at my father, whose approving nod as well as renovated appearance gave warrant for the unusual indulgence.

Proceeding to keep my appointment, about five o'clock next day, I could not fail to notice among the villagers the same subdued perturbation which I had before observed, and have mentioned to you. It also struck me that the usual population of the little place had been increased by new comers, all, however, fishermen, as was evident by their blue trousers and jackets, their best, in honour—I supposed, exclusively—of the day, Sunday.

In a circle, within the circle of the tower, I found your

brother: I gained his sitting-apartment, after crossing the wooden bridge over the deep, broad, dry fosse, through a kind of guard-room — a semicircle, where his men sat on forms at a rough deal-table, some mending their clothes, some furbishing their pistols, carbines, or cutlasses; and a goodly display of these weapons was on the walls over their heads. Again they eyed me in silence, one only ushering me to his officer, with a word and a bow; and again their appearance and manner, now added to by their situation, interested me.

I was not sumptuously entertained, as you may suppose, under all the circumstances; yet our dinner was a good English one, and our wines not to be found fault with. But, in truth, we wanted little else than one another's conversation to pass a very pleasant evening, — or part of one, I should have said.

The sun had gone down an hour, when, once or twice, your brother paused, and seemed to listen with some attention. I heard a dull sullen noise, but thought it the mixed boom and clatter of the sea and the shingles, coming up to us, a good distance from the beach, to the high ground on which the tower stood, and again deadened by the thickness of the tower's walls.

"No," said Alexander, smiling, "I know all modifications of sea sounds somewhat better than you can, and I swear to you this is none of them: it comes from the village, and is formed of human voices."

"What can it be, then? Hood has long ago removed himself out of danger," I observed.

"I hope so; yet I have suspected that he seemed half inclined, at our parting, to linger out the day, if not the evening, in the village, perhaps with an old crony or two — Hollo!" he went on, sitting upright, and brightening into interest, as, along with the repetition of the distant and disagreeable noise, a woman was heard talking rapidly, and almost in screams, outside the tower.

The man who had conducted me in, and afterwards attended table, entered in some agitation; and to a challenge from his officer answered, that "a girl what used to make up things for Lieutenant Hood" was abroad, and

brought word that Hood had not left the village, but had dined with friends at the Anchor; and that the old smuggler's funeral passing by, followed by crowds from all parts, and himself left for show in his coffin, the people had surrounded the inn, and were now calling for Lieutenant Hood, and groaning, and hissing him, men, women, and children; and, in fine, Martha Huggett earnestly entreated the new lieutenant to hasten with all his force to the Anchor, and hinder mischief, before it was too late.

Making little of the girl's fuss, and of the whole matter, and soundly rating the man before him for his confused manner and story, your brother lost not a moment, however, in attending to this appeal. Hastily putting on his cap, after a word to his tower's crew, he was wishing me a good evening. I requested to be allowed to accompany him. He hesitated, and spoke of probable inconvenience to me. I pressed my suit, and we sallied forth together, followed not only by all of our present garrison, one or two excepted, but at a distance, and gradually, by all the sentinels from the tower along the cliffs, as far as the point which I have before described to you: one pistol shot from the tower, taken up and repeated by them, from one to another, being the signal to summon them to our aid.

Your brother scarce spoke a word on our way to the village; but I saw it was not because he was off his guard, and puzzled, but rather because he was deliberately making up his mind to the course best to be pursued. And at another look at him, I felt I had nothing to fear from his impetuosity.

We were within half a quarter of a mile of the scene of disturbance. Our path thither was down the rather abrupt slope of the lump of ground upon which the tower was based, then by the edge of the diminishing cliff, and, lastly, along the shingles, gained by rude steps, of which you have before heard. Not an individual met us in our hasty advance. Even Lieutenant Hood's laundress had disappeared — Heaven knows on what business of her own, though lately I begin to suspect. We gained a near view

of the Anchor — of its front, in the street. Alexander halted his men, and looked on for a moment.

A formidable crowd, indeed, surrounded the inn, rolling round it by a passage and a narrow lane, at either side, and doubtless closing again, at its rear. Women and children flocked at the skirts of the throng; but the great majority were men. Your brother and I jumped upon an old wall, which enabled us to look down upon them.

In the middle of the mass of people were a chosen number, wearing black-crape hatbands. Within them, again, stood perhaps half a dozen, bearing the coffin of old Moffit on their shoulders; but the coffin was not open, as Martha Huggett seemed to have intimated. A bundle of articles of dress was heaped upon it, however, — doubtless the mortally stained clothes of the deceased, though the increasing darkness did not allow me to be sure, at the moment.

Every tongue called out the name of Hood — "Hood! Hood! to join the funeral!" and between each pause, the groanings and growlings of the men, and the gurgling shrieks of some women, and the yelling of children, and even the barking and yelping of dogs, made a vile chorus. I felt, and for an instant gave a thought to the fearful power of a mob; although this, compared with city mobs, was insignificant. With their union of purpose, passion, and well-matured bodily strength, I saw that the people before me were able to demolish the poor Anchor inn, and confound its very stones with the shingles at hand on the beach, if they could in no other way gratify their exasperation, or were not diverted from their intentions.

We glanced up at the windows of the besieged house of entertainment. The shutters of all of them were closed, as was the substantial hall-door. But stones and other missiles had been begun to be flung at the former before our arrival, and an impatient knocking at the latter now gradually increased into furious thumping and crashing.

"This won't do," said your brother to me, — observe, though I have paused to describe what I saw, we had not been looking on more than half a minute, and I believe that few of the crowd as yet noticed us, — "this won't do;

they must be stopped directly. What's all this, lads?" he called out, from the top of the old wall — every eye turned to him, and there was comparative silence — "Stand still, men-o'-war's men," he continued, "and do not follow me — you have no duty before you, at present: — tell me, good lads, what's the matter?" — Here he jumped down, and peaceably, though boldly, approached them.

They renewed their cries for "Hood! to follow in the funeral!"

"Is that all? To be sure he will, and so will I, and my men along with me: Lieutenant Hood has stopped for the purpose; and where's the poor old fellow's wife? I had forgotten a message to her — where is she? here?" he bustled through them, towards the coffin. The people did not oppose him; and I could see, from my high position on the wall, only one discontented brow among the bearers of the corpse, namely, that of the young carpenter, (now in his Sunday attire, like the rest,) although he was the person who pointed out Mrs. Moffit to your brother, saying, in a surly voice, "There she be."

"And I'm glad I've met her," resumed the peace-maker: "here, Mrs. Moffit, is a slight parting gift from my friend Lieutenant Hood, with his sincere regrets for what has happened; and allow me to add a trifle to it; my men ask leave to do the same, as soon they have finished a little subscription between them — pray take it — or, your friend here will hold it for you:" he forced it into another woman's hand. "We are indeed all very sorry, — very sorry that our strict duty will now and then get us into these things; but I say, my lads, some of you ought to be a bit more cautious and sly, or not so obstinate, you know, — that is, if you will be such cursed rogues — d'ye understand?" — he smiled good-humouredly, and many of the rough-minded fellows who heard him seemed amused at his blundering good-nature, as they thought. — "And so, fall back, now, from the door, will you, and let me up to tell my friend what you want him to do: we will be down again with you, arm in arm, as soon as you get the old boy, here, under weigh, in good order, and, as I said — fall back, my lad, won't you?" to the young carpenter, the

only one who now pertinaciously obstructed the approach to the door:—"as I said, he shall have a guard of honour, as soon as,—Then you won't?" he interrupted himself again to expostulate with the carpenter.

"No!" was the only reply, extended to a length of growling sound.

"Is this fair, lads?" appealed Alexander to the crowd.

"Come along, Sam Geeson," said many voices.

"Do, Sam—come along," exhorted a girl, advancing, and laying her hand on his arm. To my edification I recognised our maid-servant, Lucy Peat.

"There now—do—get away with your sweetheart," resumed Alexander, jokingly.

"Sweetheart? what's that to you if she be? I'll stand none of your nons'ns," answered Sam, with a philosophical objection to be spoken kindly to, in which some of his class are proficients.

"Come, my lad, stand back," pursued Lieutenant Graves, knocking at the door:—"Mrs. Moffit, won't you and your friends call him away?"

"Nons'ns, I say again," repeated Geeson;—"I have a right to stand here, and you've none to bid me go along."

Your brother's last appeal to the more reasonable had produced some effect, reckoning upon which, doubtless, he now began to show his tusks. "Is there no constable here?" he demanded.

"No there bayn't—do you take him for a fool?" continued Sam. The demand was repeated, but remained unanswered.

"Is there no constable here, to keep the King's peace, I ask?" Alexander's voice rose high:—"we have enough to keep it without a constable," pointing to his men; "but is there no constable to make us all quiet?"

"There be, sir," answered a sad, plaintive voice, from the outskirts of the crowd; "here be two on 'em; and I be beadle."

"Then, constables and beadle, come forward, and secure this troublesome chap."

"We thought to do our duty before, sir, but they used

threatening language," answered another unseen person, doubtless one of the lukewarm constables.

"D'you hear that?" demanded Sam Geeson, with a rude laugh.

"Do *you* continue to refuse me free approach to this door?" questioned your brother.

"And don't *you* know?" retorted the young rioter.

"Then, here, constables!"—and with the promptness and courage of a young lion, Alexander collared Geeson, and pushed him back through the crowd.—"Make way, lads," he cried,—"make way for the only disturber of the peace among you! Constables, your duty! men-o'-war's men, stand quiet! Mrs. Moffit, tell your friends what's best for them!—Constables, here he's for you, now, ready to your hand—take care of him!"—And without the slightest resistance from the law-fearing though law-breaking crowd, the young carpenter was in the hands of the guardians of the peace, and of their melancholy beadle, the most grotesquely clad beadle I had ever seen. Doubtless, Alexander's previous appeals to them, the friendly gifts to Mrs. Moffit, and the promise to bestow unusual and unexpected honours on the funeral of the deceased, to say nothing of the presence of the men-o'-war's men, had helped to calm down the exasperation of the generality of the people, and induced them to accept the more penitent attendance of Hood upon the corpse of the old smuggler, in lieu of whatever arbitrary retaliation had been in store for him. I must add that Miss Lucy Peat played, with her loud gabble and expostulations at the arrest of Geeson, a prominent though secondary part in this scene.

Lieutenant Graves was again standing at the inn-door a few seconds afterwards, and again knocking loudly for admission. He called on "the friends of Mrs. Moffit" to pledge themselves to await peaceably his re-appearance with Hood, and they did so. The landlady of the Anchor then cautiously opened the door, admitted him, and closed and secured it again.

He did not make his appearance as soon as I had suspected, and meantime some things happened that drew my attention.

I saw about a dozen of the least prepossessing of the men of the crowd group together at its skirts and talk expressively, pointing after Geeson and the constables. The words "the cage" caught my ear, and presently they detached themselves, followed by some twenty more, from their friends, and walked hastily up the street.

At about the moment of their departure, the girl Martha Huggett approached demurely towards the Anchor, from the road leading to the isolated group of houses and cottages in one of which I live. Whether she had come upon that road of a sudden, from some path to the cliff, out of our sight, I leave herself to answer. She spoke first with those of the crowd whom she met first; then she glided unobtrusively through them, and still whispered something, pointing cautiously along the line of the coast. The movement which followed surprised me; and I remembered at that moment a word which Lieutenant Hood had told me about Lilly White and his lugger. One by one, or two by two, more than half of those ostensibly assembled to do honour to Mas'r Moffit's funeral, lounged off the way Martha Huggett had come, and at a turn of the road disappeared from view.

Before the last of them had vanished, the shutters of one of the front windows of the inn opened, and I perceived your brother and Hood standing at the glass, plainly visible in the candle-light at their backs. Hood pointed after the deserters, and seemed to impress something eagerly on his companion. Alexander threw up the window, and asked hastily,—"Has the funeral gone forward without us?"

Those immediately about the coffin answered, No! "Then where have those men gone?" he continued—"What! am I played a trick, after all?"—and he disappeared with Hood from the window, and quickly issued into the street.

"Bury the old man, now, in your own way, and no more words about it!" he said, sternly:—"I repeat, I am sorry for his death—but bury him—bury him!" The remainder of the people, men, women, and children, moved off with the poor bandied-about corpse of my polite old friend. "Follow me, lads!"—to his stationary and patient men-o'-war's men:—"But what's to do now?"

The two constables stumbled back towards the Anchor, as fast as their efforts to hold Geeson between them permitted: the picturesque beadle, flourishing a very curious badge of office, was running on much faster before them. Some of those who had stolen away to rescue the young carpenter followed; and two gentlemen on horseback trotted after them.

"Beware a riot!" cried the foremost horseman, in whom I recognised Earl Lintern; the other was his son George. "I have been but tardily informed of these matters; but now that a magistrate *is* here, beware a riot, I say, young man, and you, fellows, who press on him. Constables, back with him to the cage."

"'T will never hold him, such a night as this be, my Lord," replied one of the constables.

"Then, sir," continued the magistrate, addressing Alexander, (the Honourable George Allen had intercepted the still afflicted Lucy Peat, and was whispering to her, at his stirrup,) — "then, sir, allow me to call on you for temporary assistance, in the name of the King's peace, particularly as I understand that 't is you have a charge against this foolish lad."

"What am I to do, sir? I beg pardon, but my time is precious."

"Keep him in your tower, sir, till he can be sent to —— gaol."

"With all my heart, sir—bring him along, lads, constables and all; though — there — good evening, sir: — Mr. Mutford," as he passed me, "good evening to you, too, at last."

"Let me see it out," I pleaded, and kept on by his side.

We gained the steps which led up from the shingles to the path to the tower. There Lieutenant Graves detached half of his men along the sea's edge, and they parted from us, making all speed. We arrived, with the other half, the constables and Geeson, at the tower, and the latter was consigned to the care of the few people whom its commander had left to hold it secure in his absence. Then he wished the constables good night, and bidding the man

who knew best "the path to the Three Williams" lead the way, we all struck direct into the narrow track by the cliff's edge, and pushed forward at a trot.

I asked what was the matter, notwithstanding that I had my own suspicions.

"The admirable rascals!" answered your brother: "I do believe they have succeeded in as well-planned and as well-performed a scheme as rogues and smugglers ever attempted! Hood is sure of it. But we shall see. At present, 't is lost time talking. We shall see!"

"Lugger, standing out from shore!" cried our guide, stopping a moment, and pointing down to the sea.

"It is, by heavens!" said Alexander. For my own part, I saw, indeed, a dark something in motion on the sea below us, but a good way on. "Steady, lads, and silence; we may meet some of them above; and if the rest of us have sense, they ought to surprise some more by the water's edge — but no, confound their stupidity!" we heard pistols discharged under us — "there 's a signal to baffle every one but the smugglers — ay, themselves who make it — lubbers! that couldn't wait for a short shot and close grappling! Up, however!"

We continued along the track I have described to you, dear Graves, not eventually striking a little inland, however, as I had formerly done. Having come in view of the bleak and round summit of the point, we proceeded by the very high cliffs over the sea.

"Three Williams a-head," said our guide, pointing to three remarkable tall conical piles of chalk, which shot up to the level of the cliff in this point, from its base, but without touching it.

"Speak lower, and a sharp look out," answered your brother. The man gained the perfect level of the land at the cliff's verge before us, and gave another announcement.

"Smugglers ahead, but making off!"

We sprang on, and quickly gaining his advantage in position over us, I saw, at about a quarter of a mile in advance, groups of dark figures hurrying to the right, inland. Vehicles of different kinds, carts, light and heavy,

gigs, flies, (and, peradventure, one of the latter, from its general make and air, in the distance, might have had the honour to be whirled off by two steeds called "Harrit, Miss," and "Polly, Missis,") were in rapid motion before them. We heard no sound of feet, of horses, or of wheels, on the soft but elastic and almost trackless sward; but something like the jingle of chain-harness now and then struck on our ears.

"Chase them, every man!" was your brother's command, instantly given: "chase them! at least to the next village, or until they quite distance you; and look out for me, hereabouts — perhaps they have left something or some one behind; I'll see."

His men directly left us alone, running in the track of the smugglers, who had already disappeared, however, down into one of the spacious wild valleys formed by the inland dipping of the point.

I walked with Alexander, still by the cliffs, to the Three Williams. We arrived at the commencement of a very precipitous track, beginning at their verge, and winding zig-zag down the nearly perpendicular face of the chalky precipice.

"This is the spot of which Hood told me," said your brother; "and here they not only work their tubs, and other lighter though more valuable articles, up from the beach, with ropes and huge baskets, but, he affirms, come up themselves, with great loads on their backs."

"Impossible," I observed, "for the latter achievement, at least; see, there does not appear a stay for the hand, scarce a spot for the foot, and 't is a hundred yards, at least, to the shingles."

"Keep your eye looking down," he resumed, "and you may find yourself undeceived."

"How?" I asked, following his advice.

"Note the third turn that the track takes," he whispered: "does nothing (lie on your breast, but still look close,)—does nothing stir over it?"

Thus instructed, my eyes sharpened, and I certainly saw something move cautiously upward.

"And 't is a woman, too," he continued, "and so I

am glad to be saved from what, perhaps, my duty must have told me to do, had it been a man; don't you notice the dress? a bonnet and a black spencer?"

"No," I replied, "there my optical powers fail me. But the person, whoever it is, seems now stationary."

"Yes; I understand. She has been sent up from the rascals below to see how matters go on here, and now know, by the silence, that all is well, or, at least, pretty well. And that tells badly, too, for my men on the beach. They have been either beaten back, or eluded: the latter, I think; nay, any thing else is impossible. And see; the petticoat scout now returns to make her report."

The figure was indeed quickly descending, and soon faded from our eyes.

"Well," I resumed, after rather a long pause between us, during which I am sure we were thinking of very different matters, "'t is worth any thing at all to be *here*, at this hour, lying on our chins on this fine precipice, over the sea, with a gusty breeze around us, unknown in the flat world of villages and towns below, and the sea-birds, that your men's pistols have frightened from their sleep, flitting and sweeping like birds in dreams, half-way from us to the sea, and the mysterious sea itself working and throeing away, away, without sound or apparent motion, but still in its endless labour,—in the moonless and starless dark, we can't tell where, or how, or why, or ——"

"Stop—I beg your pardon—that's all very pretty, but I think I see a rope over the cliff," interrupted your brother; "all very pretty, I say; only, ever since I became midshipman, with more of the sea, and all about it, than you can now enjoy, to contemplate at my leisure, I have often preferred my hammock—I 'll read it with you, any day you like," he continued, rising; "now I want to look at this—ay, I thought so! some of their tackle left behind — see!"

I followed him a few paces. He had in his hand a thick rope, which was secured in the soil at our feet by iron hooks, and which fell tight over the edge of the cliff: "and there 's another," he continued, pointing a few yards onward, "and are both laden, or empty? let 's try: a hand, here!"

I grasped the first discovered rope with him, and we began to pull at it together might and main. We succeeded in getting up a few coils: but while all my strength was lavished upon a renewed effort, I suddenly felt my arms secured by two men at least, and at the same time I knew that my friend behind me could ejaculate, and — heaven forgive him — imprecate a little, as he did, only because he was treated in the same unceremonious way.

"Want to know as what the baskets be loaded or empty, Lieutenant?" demanded a strange and deep voice, though not an ill-tempered one; "try, then, you and your friend Mr. Mutford!" And while we manfully and vainly resisted, dear Graves, as men, and vain ones might, I call earth and sea to witness that we were forced separately into the separate baskets at the ends of the two ropes, which our accommodating eavesdroppers promptly hauled up to the table-land, dropped without an apology down the face of the cliff, and permitted to descend, cautiously and providently, to save us, I suppose, from chance buffets against the chalk (now hard enough, notwithstanding my former poetical objections). And so, down and down we swung: we, I own; for I have reason to know that your brother accompanied me, at a little distance, in his own particular basket, though, at the time, I own I did not see him; no, nor think of him either, nor scarcely care about him; my chief solicitude being exercised in clinging close to the rope of my personal destiny, keeping myself steady in my aërial bark of osier, and petitioning Heaven, that, as I rested an instant on a frail projection, or slid down an inward curving of the smuggler's desperate track, or swung at the mercy of my guardian angel's and of their hands, I might not become shingle-material, or, at the best, a morsel of breakfast for the next shore-exploring young shark.

Let me not boast. I had not my presence of mind at hand at the moment that I must have safely touched the beach; and nothing do I remember till I found myself close by your brother, hurried onward by the sea's edge. I believe the considerate scoundrels had suffered to find its way down my throat a drop or two of brandy. Cer-

tainly, though my ideas continued a little confused, my bodily strength became recruited; not sufficiently, however, to even attempt to resist the over-mastering force which hurried me along, ankle deep in the shingles at one moment, at the next running over the smooth, cool sand; and it appeared that your brother was equally incompetent to control his involuntary motion.

"What do you want?" I heard him ask.

"Mean you no harm, Lieutenant," some one answered him; "and all we want is Sam Geeson, out of your tower, 38., to let him go to work for his old mother to-morrow morning."

"He shall stay there till he is removed to —— gaol," replied Alexander.

"We 'll see, sir," croaked a second voice, though still not savagely; and they continued to help us along.

"Have a care what you are about," resumed Lieutenant Graves, "my men will meet you here."

"Never fear, sir," returned the first speaker.

"The scoundrels! have they run from you?"

"Didn't say that, Lieutenant; but the coast be clear, at any rate. Have you never in your life followed a false chase yourself, sir?"

Alexander allowed an impatient and bitter ejaculation to escape him. There was a pause — I mean in speaking, only; and I ventured to ask, — "And what have *I* done? what do you want of *me?*"

"You, sir? Nothing at all; only, as it happens you be the Lieutenant's friend, by his side when we borrowed him, we want to keep you and him together, don't you see, just to keep *you* from not remembering to tell people where he might be found, supposing you to have your own way, you know."

"Oh, I know," I said; and on still they forced us, no matter how gently, until at length we stopped at a point at the base of the bare cliff, where rude steps — perhaps twenty of them, — ascended to a yawning orifice, some ten feet high, and six broad. The tide was only beginning to come in; otherwise we could not have gained this spot: for, dark as it was, I saw the damp mark of high-water more than half way up the steps.

We ascended to the opening of the cave, — as such it proved to be, though an artificial one. We first entered an outward chamber, or, if you like, ante-room, lower than the height of the entrance. Here all was pitchy darkness. A light gleamed further inward; and a man, who, I presume, had expected us, presently appeared standing in a kind of archway, a lantern in his hand. Obeying some friendly hints, we approached him, and he ushered us, through the archway, into a rather spacious and lofty apartment. I do not say that it was of any particular form, square, or round, or oblong, or that its ceiling was flat, or coved; it bore, however, at a glance, the features of a handicraft excavation, or, at least, of a natural one much modified, if not enlarged. There were recesses, shaped into shelves, around its walls, if so they are to be called: there were others, with a seat left, certainly for resting the limbs; and there was a large flat platform in about the middle of the chamber, apparently to serve as a bed, with or without other appurtenances. Moreover, I descried hundreds of inscriptions on the sides of the sea-cavern; some, names only; others, more profuse effusions, yet to be deciphered, and comprehended, and admired.

"What thieves' den is this?" asked Alexander, of the only man who now visibly attended on us.

"Never heard of Arthur's hole, sir?" demanded the fellow, in return, touching his hat quite obsequiously, and smiling. Your brother impatiently answered that he had not; I, that I had; as, indeed, the local fame of the place did not fail to reach my ears during my gossiping enquiries at the village, after every thing, of every body; though this was my first visit to Arthur's hole. And I proceeded to enquire if it had not been made a good while since by an eccentric clergyman, whom some people considered a little mad, partly to serve himself as a retreat from the world, partly to hold out a chance refuge to the crews of ships which might be wrecked on that dangerous point of the coast?

"All right, what I said," the man observed; "and it was hard to tell if it had ever done any ship's crew any

good, during the life of its owner, though here he used to sit, every stormy night, showing as much light, seaward, as might be seen a good way off: lately, however, to our informant's own knowledge, the crew of the Lord Crandon, an East-Indiaman, would have perished to a man, but that Arthur's hole was at hand when she struck; in fact, her bowsprit had run into the outward mouth of the excavation, and thus many hands were enabled to jump on the floor, abroad, and secure her cable; otherwise the poor people of the coast might have witnessed as fine a wreck as the winds and waves ever sent them."

"And was it known what causes had driven the reverend Arthur to live alone in the cave?" I went on to ask, while your brother flung himself, sitting, into a recess.

I was answered that he did not always live here, but only on very stormy nights, at home or abroad, as it happened.

"What did that mean?"

"Why, when he thought the wind was high enough on the sea to drive in a ship or a boat, he came to his cavern to try and do good, though it might be a calm at home; and just as often, a storm at home sent him here, fair weather or foul, for peace-sake." Still I pressed for an explanation, and the fellow added, with a grin, that the poor parson used to have a wife at home.

Lieutenant Graves changed the conversation by demanding if his friend and himself were to be detained in this place?

He was told that young Sam Geeson, the carpenter, had a good many relations and friends, and that they would be very much obliged if the Lieutenant relented a little towards him.

And who dared to keep him, Alexander, a prisoner in Arthur's hole, provided he did not relent?

Every one would be sorry to do any such thing; and yet, abundance of those friends and relations waited in the outer room to strike a bargain with the Lieutenant; and if that bargain were not quickly entered into, the sea itself would then dare to hinder us from getting home for the night: though it was only to say that Sam was free, and

we might all leave Arthur's hole with scarce a wet shoe, as the tide had only just begun to turn.

"Go out to your cousins and brother-worthies," said Alexander; and when our attendant had obeyed his command, he asked my opinion of what was to be done, first giving his own views.

"I have no great quarrel with this Sam Geeson," he said, "and don't see that he has done much, after all, to get into the clutches of the law, and have his stupidity magnified to something enormous: so, on that account I feel little zeal to hold him in durance in my martello-tower, particularly as he retaliates by keeping me, and you along with me, in Arthur's hole. But here is my difficulty. Sam will be connected, right or wrong, with the smuggling adventures of this night; and if I send word to the tower to have him shoved across the bridge, folk may say that I liberated a smuggler out of fear for myself."

"And that, while a huge falsehood would not eventually serve you," I replied. "Cannot you arrange the matter thus? Let the law have him, and charge what it likes against him, but do you fail to support that charge, and Sam must be enlarged."

"And promise to that effect to those smugglers?"

"Yes, and at once; to guard against waiting the tide's leisure for an escape from this den."

"I should still leave myself open to the accusation of compromising my duty," replied your brother; "but let us see. My friends at the helm, in London, are kind as well as able friends — I will write to them, plainly stating the whole affair; and I make no doubt that some apprehensions for my personal safety, as well as for yours, in the same trap with me, and on my account, will urge them to give me permission to adopt the course you suggest: meantime, until an answer arrives to my letter, I can go very near pledging my word to Master Geeson's friends and relations, that, although I allow him to be paraded before a magistrate, he shall encounter no prosecution at my hands."

I applauded this course as the very best to be taken, under the circumstances. Your brother called in our

gaoler, and signified it to him. The man again withdrew into the outer chamber of the excavation ; again appeared before us, and announced that all was right, provided the Lieutenant gave the promise in writing. After a moment's demur, Alexander consented. The sole question then was about pen, ink, and paper ; and the tide, raising its voice among the nests of black rocks a short distance from Arthur's hole, began to warn us that it was time to go and seek those articles somewhere else, since they did not seem at hand where we were.

Your brother, innocently enough, I thought — for certainly he meant to keep faith with the smugglers — proposed repairing, at once, to his tower. Our diplomatist smiled, and remarked that there was a gentleman's house, near at hand, where we would be sure to be accommodated ; and thither we had better go, as, he believed, means had been taken — though harmless ones — to beckon the Lieutenant's men off the straight road to it. Alexander saw he must consent, for still the admonitions of the tide grew louder and hoarser.

Accordingly, once more escorted by the friends who had received us out of our baskets at the bases of the Three Williams, we descended the steps of Arthur's hole, and walked a good distance along the shingles, still, however, farther and farther from Alexander's tower. They kept us close under the cliff, and appeared more watchful than their assertions of a clear coast seemed to justify. The line of the cliff grew low, and they moved on with increased caution, making us do the same. It swept down, a little way before us, almost to the level of the shingles, and arose again, at some distance, leaving an opening or gap from the sea into the wild and broken land. Suddenly we all stopped, hiding behind a projecting rock.

" We be sure you knows the good of holding your tongue, now, for a moment, Lieutenant Graves," whispered a surly-browed though well-dressed man, of our escort — I recognised him — he was the husband of our first landlady, at the sea-houses.

" I suppose I must be silent, though I see what you mean," answered Alexander ; " that's one of Lieutenant

Oglis's men at the other side of the gap, and his watch-house cannot be many yards distant."

"Right and wrong, in a breath, sir," observed our kind acquaintance of Arthur's hole; "one of Mr. Oglis's men, sure enough, though the watch-house be not so near as you think of; and we've only to get him out of the way, and the pen and ink shall be yours."

"If you hurt the man, I will give the alarm, though you murder me among you," resumed your brother.

"Never fear, sir, never fear; you'll just look on, quietly, that's all."

The speaker separated himself from his friends, as if he were to come to issue with the man-o'-war's man single-handed, and began to creep clear of the cover of the rock, which hitherto had screened us all from hostile observation. The object of his attention stood, as Alexander had said, at the other side of the gap, close by the edge of the again gradually rising cliff; and he stood there, quite still, his straw-hat and white trousers forming patches against the deep dead colour of the sea and sky. Doubtless, the noise of the bursting waves upon the shingles must have exclusively filled his ears; and he seemed to gaze in solitary meditation upon them, except that now and then his head was slowly turned in the inland direction of, I conjectured, his watch-house, perhaps to observe if his comrades yet approached to relieve him on his lonesome post.

It seemed impossible to me that our single adventurous smuggler could surprise this well-armed man; nay, that any number of our guards could secure him, without violence. The same opinion was whispered to me by Alexander. We could only look on, however, attentively.

In a few moments the smuggler, after creeping quite close by the base of the cliff, at his side of the gap, clambered up from the shingles into a sloping rent of the chalk, and we lost sight of him. Some time now elapsed in suspense, while we all watched the sentinel of the waves. He turned suddenly on his heel, and with his back to us paced on his walk. His figure was blurring and mixing with the darkness, when he turned again, faced us, strode back nearly to his first stand, and after another look inland,

resumed his set gaze at the sea. There was, however, a slight change in his position, and of course in its accompaniments. Immediately at his left shoulder, the land now fell abruptly to the cliff, at right angles, and at the other side of its line I conjectured there was also a descent. I was right. The smuggler, after having doubtless taken a wide range to avoid crossing the gap, slowly put up his head over that line, and we were wondering what he would do, when he jumped upon the sentinel, seizing him tightly in his arms, and dragging him to the ground. This seemed the signal for others to come to his aid. Master Brown, snatching a large folded sack from the shoulders of a man before him, and saying to your brother, "Never fear, still, sir; it be only an old trick," bounded to his comrade's side, two others following him. Then we all moved slowly towards the scene of exploit; and when your brother and I arrived there, no man-o'-war's man was visible, only the sack instead, on the ground, well filled, tied hard at the neck, and rolling about, as if of its own accord. I could scarce repress my laughter at the sight; and I saw that as your brother stared curiously at the grotesque object, he had as much difficulty in keeping a stern disapproving frown on his brow.

Our conductors now expressed their belief that if they had but a van or a fly at hand we might gain our destination without farther impediment. And even as they spoke, a fly came noiselessly, though rapidly, down a falling valley, which opened before us, and as it drew near, I recognised in its driver my old friend Mas'r Fox.

"Good night, good night," he said, approaching us; "has any one seen my company hereabouts? I be blowed, but I'm afeard all's not right with the poor gentlefolk: they left me here, at about twelve o'clock to-day to go a pleasure-boating, and ——"

"Never you mind, Mas'r Fox," interrupted Master Brown; "here be another and as good a load for you; so, your time bayn't lost."

"What! who?" demanded Fox, jumping down: "bless me, if it ain't our new lieutenant at our tower! and Mr. Mutford, too! Well, I be blowed!"

"Up with you," exhorted Brown.

"Take care what you're a-doing, lads," remonstrated Master Fox, seriously, "against these gentlefolk and myself; it's a shame for you all, I tell you."

"Go along, or the fly must go without you," persisted Brown: "jigger me, but I think you be turning jest into earnest, you be chawing about it so long."

And with various other ejaculations, and many sighs, Fox continued to play his innocent part, calling on me, all the time he helped me into his fly, with your brother and three of the smugglers, (a fourth was to sit beside him, on his perch,) to take notice how much against his will, and how much in the teeth of his lawful calling, at this hour of the night, he was forced, &c.

"Get along with you up to Mr. Linnock's house," were the directions given to our charioteer; and away we rolled over the springing sod, now ascending, now descending, lumps and sweeps of wild grazing ground only around us; not a tree, a road, a house in sight; and I must notice that I could not help enjoying the strange ride, with its strange scenery and companionship, animate and inanimate, and its occasion; and the cheery breeze that we cut through, and the low-built and almost starless heavens over our heads.

In half an hour, perhaps, we got upon a rude road, or track; and in another, entered a most isolated village,—a few cottages built at the bases of two confronting little hills, and continuing and ending with their short sweep. It was past eleven o'clock, as our watches informed us; yet few of the inmates of this solitary hamlet seemed yet retired to rest. Feeble lights glimmered through most of the windows of the low-roofed houses; and as our fly clattered by, many a head, male and female, was thrust observantly through the half closed doors. I accounted to myself for the late hours kept by the primitive inhabitants upon this night.

We left the village behind us, and proceeded under the shelter of a row of trees, occasionally, but as often over unplanted, uncultivated, and unenclosed ground. A good sized house appeared before us, blackening against the

sufficiently black sky; and, unlike the bustling hamlet, not sending us an inviting ray from its windows. We passed thatched and tiled buildings, seemingly belonging to it, and pools of water, peered into each by a stunted thorn or oak. We arrived at a wall which surrounded it, or rather at a gateway in the wall; but the gate, apparently in a neglected condition, offered no impediment to our progress, and we entered a spacious though littered yard, and drew up before the house, welcomed by a strange mixture of sounds; the hoarse barking and baying of dogs of monstrous size and hideous aspects, the cursing of men and boys of the establishment to keep them quiet, or at least guiltless of our blood, and the merry tingling of a piano-forte within the house, interrupted now and then by the merrier notes of female laughter.

I glanced up at the windows of the building. They were secured with substantial-looking shutters within, and iron bars without; one of our conductors knocked at a door for admission. It was not in the front of the house, nor like a chief-entrance door, but lay in one of the many angles of the uncouthly-built edifice, and was low, narrow, and arched at top; yet it seemed the only one of which we could avail ourselves. It opened. A woman, tidily dressed, a maid servant, as I afterwards found, appeared at it, with a candle. Master Brown, after whispering to me, "Pray, Mr. Mutford, forget you have known *me* before," requested permission of Mrs. Linnock to write a line, on important business. She retired; and soon re-appeared with another female, a young, pretty, laughing, fashionably attired, and not very vulgar-mannered girl, who said, addressing us, that her father was from home, but in his name, she offered us the accommodations we required; and she paused at the door, as if to usher us herself into the house.

Perhaps your brother had previously felt some reluctance to pass in; now he stepped down readily, however, with a smiling face; I quickly followed him. Miss Eliza Linnock, as I afterwards learned was her name, taking little notice of me, (I did not wonder, nor was I jealous of your gallant-looking brother,) stood aside at the door, and motioned him forward. At the sight of a narrow, crooked

passage, vaulted over head, he hesitated an instant. "Come," she said, laughing, —

> "On Heaven and on thy lady call,
> And enter the enchanted hall!"

And answering her, by going on with the quotation, he crossed the threshold of his present prison, I meekly following him.

Miss Eliza, tripping lightly along the flagged passage, opened a door to the left, and showed us into a small parlour: only one of the smugglers accompanied us, and he was one of those with whom we had held no previous communication — if indeed we had seen his face before. Candles were on a table, but still pen, ink, and paper did not appear; our young hostess, however, promised to return with them; and leaving us a moment, came back, indeed, bearing a nice rose-wood writing desk, which she recommended as her own; and then she withdrew a second time.

"You wait for this undertaking I've promised?" your brother asked of the mute though not unobservant smuggler. The man nodded, politely, as no doubt he thought. Alexander soon wrote it, read it out, and handed it to him. "It was all right — but would Lieutenant Graves be so good-natured as just to write another line to his men at the tower, telling them to let young Geeson go before the magistrate without delay?"

"I can manage all that, myself," answered Alexander, "as I shall be at my tower as soon as any one else could get to it for me: — tell the little lad who drove us here that we are ready for another ride."

"That little lad be gone home, sir," said the smuggler. "Your brother stormed unmeasuredly at poor Master Fox. And what was to be done, then? Would the people of the house we were in supply us with horses — or were there any at hand — suppose in the hamlet we had passed? or could we be guided a-foot to his tower? How far was it off?"

Six miles, by the shortest cut: though it made little difference how far or how near it might be: surely Lieu-

tenant Graves did not think of seeing it again until an answer could come to the letter he proposed writing to London? or until Sam Geeson was a free man, at all events?

Alexander now began to open his eyes; and along with a good deal of exclamation, and of reprehension of the whole gang of smugglers, demanded to know what was meant? He was forthwith satisfied. Sam Geeson was a person much esteemed among his friends, on account of many useful as well as good qualities; and all who now interceded for him felt themselves bound to get him out of trouble without leaving a doubt of failure. They could not even tell but that Lieutenant Hood might inconvenience him with some old charges, if an example were set; or perhaps other folk; who could say? Besides, he was wanted, at present, by some who occasionally gave him work to do, on particular business; and, in fact, it had been resolved to befriend him in a downright in-earnest way.

Your brother now showed little of his former vexation and impatience. His features became resolutely composed, and bending a look on the smuggler, he said, — "I am unarmed — but let me see if I shall be opposed in endeavouring to leave this house: stand back, my lad."

He was passing to the door of the room. The man offered no resistance, but quietly besought him to listen to a word of reason. Alexander stopped impatiently; and the smuggler went on. It had been voted, he said, and was a settled thing, that he should not go at large, at present; and he would find himself baffled in any attempt to regain his liberty. For that night, and for the next day, and for every night and day that he awaited an answer to his London letter, people were to keep waiting by the high wall of the yard, without, and by the walls of the gardens and the orchard of the house, so as to watch him closely; and if he did not remain content with his present lodgings, why, they were to take him back to Arthur's hole; that is, the very first time he should try to escape.

"So — and Mr. Linnock and his family are to be my gaolers?" demanded your brother: — "they connive at this impudent outrage?"

That was a mistake: both Mr. Linnock and his brother, who lived along with him, were in London on business, would stay there some time, — long enough for seeing out the present arrangements, — and so could never have an opportunity of interfering till every thing should be settled peaceably, and, therefore, no one ought to blame those gentlemen; and as to the young ladies of the house, it had been represented to them by this time that Lieutenant Graves and his friend, Mr. Mutford, had particular reasons for wishing to pass a few days in close retirement in the country, and would trespass on their hospitality in consequence; and, doubtless, the young ladies, with their mother's consent, would behave genteelly; and the speaker was sure that Lieutenant Graves was too much of a gentleman to give any other account of the transaction to the Miss Linnocks, so as to frighten them and their mother, and also another young lady, — a perfect lady, indeed, — who lodged in the house, to say nothing of the maid-servants; and surely no more need be said to show that every thing had been done for the best with a view to the Lieutenant's comforts; and ——

With an impatient and contemptuous word your brother at length broke short the orator's discourse, and issued from the room. I closely followed him. We met no interruption in the passage, now dark, nor at the outer door, nor yet in the yard, excepting a proposed attack of the three or four ravenous watch-dogs of monstrous breed, who were checked and dragged back by persons issuing from a stable built within the walls of the yard. At the gateway, by which we had entered the premises from the open country, some demur occurred, however. Its neglected gate now appeared closed, and well though rudely secured, and half-a-dozen men stood beyond the bars; Alexander and I strove to open it, it baffled our effort: he called out to the men, who looked on silently, to assist him.

"They had no orders," they answered.

"Let 's climb," he resumed.

"No one wants to hurt you, sir," said a voice; "but don't you climb, if you bayn't mad to get back to Arthur's hole."

"Rascals! I'll have my turn yet at you all!" said Alexander, looking impatiently round the formidable wall which encompassed us.

"Oh no, sir; you'll think better of it," replied another man, as we hastily walked back to the house. The entrance-door was open, as we had left it, and in a few seconds we again confronted the pertinacious plenipotentiary of the smugglers in the little parlour.

"Well, sir, I will write my letter to London, and that's all," said your brother.

"And the line or two for the tower, sir?"

"Not a word; let that young bravo take his chance; and, at least, I shall not be the fool to set him at large, while you dare to keep me as a prisoner."

"There's our word of honour, Lieutenant Graves ——"

Your brother laughed out, suddenly and heartily, and "Confound your impudence!" he said; "but no matter, begone about your business, and let me write at once to London."

"I am to wait for the letter, sir."

"You are!" and Alexander stared, and was again growing stern and angry.

"Yes, sir; just to see that it will give no hint of where your friends might find you, supposing them of a mind to get you, by the strong hand, instead of exchanging you for poor Sam."

In fact, our resolute captors would have their way; and Alexander at length handed an open letter to the fellow, obtaining his promise to seal and forward it by post as soon as it should have undergone the scrutiny of the friends of Master Geeson.

We were then left alone; and your brother, when he had once or twice consulted my face, resumed his merriment. I joined him, and we absolutely enjoyed our situation, the Miss Linnocks and all.

"And what next?" he said to me; "what *are* we to be ordered to do next?"

"A bit of supper, gentlemen?" almost answered Miss Eliza Linnock, tripping in; "you are fatigued, by all I hear, and stand in need of it. Pray allow me to ask your

company into the next room, where my mother and my sister wait to have the pleasure of being introduced to you; and we are all happy to see you, and regret that our father and uncle are not at home to say so too: pray oblige us."

With a side glance to me, Alexander arose forthwith, graciously offered his arm, and led the lady out. I followed as I might. We entered a spacious though not lofty old-fashioned apartment, where a well-lighted and well-furnished supper table incontrovertibly appeared in smiling readiness; it was even tastefully as well as substantially laid out. An elderly, plain-habited, homely-mannered, sensible, motherly, housewifely-looking woman sat at the head; and Miss Linnock, wearing a fashionable evening-dress, like her sister, that is, — for I dread falling into mistakes, — one that left her neck and arms as bare as possible, stood at the grand piano-forte, of which the music had blessed our ears the moment we got a near view of the house, carelessly and not unskilfully touching the keys. Duly were we presented by Miss Eliza, and with all ceremony and graciousness did we take our places; and then, with the appetites of young and destitute sharks, did we engage the good things on the table, good wines and all; and I call your brother to witness that they *were* good, and French, and befitting the season, and one of them champagne, and of godlike quality.

Miss Linnock was some sad years the senior of our first specimen of the family; and whether on that account, or from natural character, grave and well-governed accordingly. Yet she smiled, too; but it was in a merely good-natured fashion, mixed up, perhaps, with a little more rustic and homely consciousness than troubled her sister, fresh home from a boarding-school — a "finisher." The old mamma did not smile at all, but, on the contrary, sighed (though I do not say her daughters never sighed all) as if her honest housewifely heart were oppressed with calculations of the business of to-morrow. But no matter. Your brother and I devoured and hob-nobbed, and laughed, and said capital things, just as if we had been born for that very night and that very situation. And renounce your friend for ever, if Mrs. Linnock did not give a toast,— "The gentle-

men's healths, and escape from all troubles!" and if Miss Eliza did not add, with a racy look and air of coquetry at your brother — "and the other poor gentleman's speedy recovery, and may the lady be grateful to her champions!" (thus insinuating her knowledge of our reasons for living incog. a few days in the country!) and if — at I don't know, (and who cares?) what o'clock — Alexander and I didn't go singing into our comfortable bed-rooms — the former having kissed Miss Eliza before her own and her mother's and her sister's faces, ere we turned up stairs.

Now there 's an evening, or rather a night and a scrap of a morning, for you, after all our perils of the cliff, the sea, and Arthur's hole. And the first sound I heard in the morning was emitted by your brother, laughing till I feared he was hysterical, in his bed (separated from mine only by a thin partition), over the successively coming recollections of the recently passed. And here I must stop, dear Graves, to go to supper again, upon the second evening of our happy captivity. To-morrow morning I shall continue — perhaps in a changed tone, for I have indeed a changed subject before me.

Yes, dear Graves, changed indeed, as, from experience and misgivings of myself, I prophesied last night. And yet this is caused as much perhaps by exhaustion of spirits, of mere animal spirits, as by distinct occurrence; and yet, again, I am not sure of that.

Man's bosom — read it for him some angel! — assuredly he cannot read it for himself; or, are the bosoms of all or of most other men calmly legible to their own eyes, and mine, alone, a blur, or a sibyl's leaf to me? I have called what I now allude to a pleasing event — is it? I cannot answer, if 't is of myself I ask the question; nor can you, without some information, if 't is of you I ask it. Well: a few words will be enough — oh, in how very few can the most swelling and fateful haps of life ever be told! Life itself! two words describe its (perhaps) only two important acts — its act of living, and its act of dying — and then —— But I am an ass. I write myself down one, without waiting for the contingency of Dogberry's aspir-

ations; that is, for you to do it, Graves: and, to make an end, it is — to be sure it is — a woman! and I need not have told you; you guessed it before; the "other lady — the perfect lady, indeed, who lodged in the house:" young, not beautiful, but better than that; of lower stature than — than Miss Eliza Linnock! and yet Alps above her: quiet, smiling, thoughtful; an informed and self-knowing spirit of good and of power; sunshine upon *me*, dear Graves! Rich, gentle spring sunshine, out in a leafy place, all freshly dyed with green; my only other comforting till I meet her, since ——

No; I have stopped to think (for the first time? answer, yourself) — and love has *not* burst the grave; that unnamed, that nameless grave!

I will be a note-taker, simply for you, dear Richard. Yesterday morning we — that is, your brother and I, and the Misses Linnock; their mother was "busy about the house" — seemed to wait breakfast for some one. We stood at a window, which, looking across the yard, commanded a door in a side wall, that, as I was told, led into the garden. That door opened, and *she* appeared, followed by an elderly female, an attendant or companion, approaching the house. "Oh, here they come, at last!" cried Miss Eliza; "and now for breakfast." Almost as she spoke, *they* entered the room. Our young ladies courtesied, and wished "good morning to Lady Ellen! and to Mrs. Planche; and hoped Lady Ellen's health was better; and that her walk in the garden had agreed with her;" and gentle and obliging answers came from both the persons addressed, and to breakfast we sat down.

Our hilarious spirits, and almost romping demeanour, underwent a correction. It was not reserve on the part of the new-comers which effected this; for, though they sat close together, and rather detached from us all, at table, reserved they were not: no, but it was the different kind of thought, and feeling, and manner, which they brought into the room, and which imperceptibly spread over us like a fresh air — a new atmosphere. Lady Ellen put down at her side a little volume which she had been reading in the garden. Miss Eliza, aware of its contents, spoke of their

merits a little flippantly, but not very ignorantly, nor in a tone of assumed equality of intellect: her lodgers replied; I hazarded an opinion; it was not treated superciliously, or with neglect; the topic continued; changed; I felt myself talking in the way that you sometimes praise, dear Graves; and it was long after breakfast before Lady Ellen and her highly-intelligent companion left us, to withdraw into the apartments sacred to them in the house.

I did not laugh much when they had gone. I wanted to ask questions about them, but the state of my acquaintance even with the Misses Linnock scarce permitted such a liberty. Miss Eliza supplied, however, some information, unasked.

"Poor Lady Ellen! it was a sad thing to see her separated from her family, on account of ill-health, and the doctor's recommendation to live in pure country air, and lead the quietest life possible, for some time; to be sure, she was well attended by Mrs. Planche and her own servants, and Mrs. Linnock and her daughters did all they could to make her comfortable; still the poor young lady must often feel quite sad and downcast, and no wonder."

"But Lady Ellen was visited by her friends?" I conjectured.

"Why, yes, by her father and younger brother, now and then."

"And by her mother and sisters, of course?"

"Oh, her mother was dead; and, as to her sisters, they are most generally out in the world, — in town, — at least they had been, for the few months of Lady Ellen's residence in the country: *their health required no looking after*," Miss Eliza added, expressively glancing at Miss Linnock.

"Nor other people's health, perhaps, if the truth were known, Eliza," remarked Miss Linnock; and then, with a laugh, Miss Eliza changed the subject, calling on Alexander, who amused himself opening and shutting her reticule, to tell her the names and qualities of her cabinet of shells.

A little devil of restlessness — one of my attendant cloud of them — took possession of me. Here was an

insinuation that the young Lady Ellen — I believe she is not seventeen — had been sent into retirement by her family upon the *pretence*, only, of ill-health ; " and certainly she does not look to be an invalid."

I added — her friends then must have had some reason for displeasure against her — what reason ? — how could one so young, so gentle, so intellectual, and, to all seeming, so good, offer them a sufficient one ? An attachment contrary to their wishes ? My spirit started, as if at a reptile in its path, and I valorously and very sensibly hated and longed to kill some one — I could not exactly tell myself who ; and so continued, till I caught a sight of my foolish, ay, and plain, face, in a mirror, and then I laughed at Michael Mutford in my sleeve, and turned on my heel from him to a window, leaving your brother and Miss Eliza at their conchology, in a far corner of the room : Miss Linnock had withdrawn, also, to be " busy about the house," I presume.

" The only rational curiosity I ought to indulge," said I, " would lead me to ask, who *are* her friends ?" but this point her young hostesses had seemed to shun, else why not have prattled on it ? surely nothing but good reasons could have stopped *them ?* — and again I felt it would be impertinent in me to question any one upon the subject. Suppose I put it all out of my head, as a matter I really had very little to do with ? and Alexander offered me the opportunity, by tapping me on the shoulder, and speaking ; for Miss Eliza, in a little fit of displeasure, I believe, at something he had said or done, had now followed her sister.

" A joke's a joke, Mutford," he said, " and I can give and take, in that way, as well as any one ; and 't is pleasant enough living here, into the bargain, if one had time for that agreeable girl : but it strikes me I ought not to sit down quietly, this morning, without another attempt to return to my duties ; so, come out with me ; and if these smuggling, humbugging scoundrels still present a really overpowering force, or if there be really no way of eluding them, or of sending word to my friends on the coast, or to a magistrate, why then, I suppose, we must

await my letter from London, and laugh away the interval as well as we can, with the still more pleasing prospect of having, in it, and in some occurrences that have gone before it, food for laughing at, any time during our life to come."

We sallied out into the yard, accordingly. Our first observation told us that the high wall which surrounded it afforded but one egress into the open country: the gate, namely, at which we had tried our skill the night before. We approached that: it was still well fastened, and seven or eight men, divided into two groups, appeared lounging near it. Again your brother called to them to allow us to pass. They kept their backs turned, as if tender of their faces, in the daylight, and said nothing, but contented themselves and him by shaking their heads.

"I 'll try them, however," he said: "they surely will not kill me, at a blow;" and with great agility he clambered over the gate, and jumped down, on the outside. Three of the men instantly seized him; and without a word in reply to his loud words, put him over the gate again, and dropped him at my side. The moment this was done, they stepped quickly out of our view to one side of the gate, its piers and the wall hiding them; and gave him to understand, that for this time, and just to allow him leisure to know what was for his good, they would give him his choice between Mr. Linnock's house and Arthur's hole; but warned him not to cross bounds again.

We saw some other men and boys looking at and enjoying this scene from the door and window of the solidly-constructed stable in a corner of the yard. Alexander walked to them, and made a lively appeal to their sense of justice, and to their fear of God and of the laws, and as the servants of an honest man, Mr. Linnock, and demanded their assistance in recovering his liberty. The fellows now kept their faces very grave, and assured him, that they, themselves, were afraid of opposing the strange men abroad — people from Rye, they believed, or some place a good way off; and they, too, had been advised not to pass the gate, or out of the premises; and the house stood in

so lonely a spot, it would be impossible to escape for help, without being overtaken ; and, moreover, they did not like to frighten the ladies within, by letting them know that they were surrounded by a gang of smugglers, " desperate chaps, what did not care what they did ;" and Mr. Linnock's male servants declared, in fact, that they could only wait in hopes of their master's return ; but if we were all to be kept in such a state of alarm till that event should occur, then, at least, we would all be righted.

Alexander, imposed upon by this rigmarole, bent his steps towards the door leading into the garden, protesting that any thing so lawless and audacious he could not imagine as of possible occurrence in England ; any thing so audacious and so ridiculous, together: a house absolutely besieged by a set of smugglers, and the servants of it bullied into passiveness, and not allowed to pass its gate, and he, Alexander, and I, his friend, thrust into it, and made prisoners in it, upon false pretences, and its family blinded as to the real cause of our intrusion, and prevailed upon to set their wits on end to entertain us. And here he very gravely asked me if I really thought that the mere fear of terrifying the Misses Linnock and their mother, and the lady lodgers, ought to keep us from telling the truth to Miss Eliza, and requesting her aid in restoring ourselves to the world?

I believe it was simply a fear on Lady Ellen's account which made me, at the moment, as solemnly assure him that I thought we were in honour and gallantry bound (though Heaven knows how I should have reasoned the case had he asked me) to abide for the present by the arrangements made by our captors. But I was rather surprised at Alexander's credulity, and could only explain it to myself by calling to mind that he was new, very new, in the coast service, and in the study of the ways, and wiles, and ramifications of smuggling, on a large scale. For my own part, I did not entertain a doubt of our true situation ; nay, I had no hesitation on the subject before we left the little parlour the previous evening. The plan of imposing a false story on Miss Eliza, her mother and sister, had ounded hollowly and vainly in my ears, the moment

our diplomatic smuggler spoke the words: the insinuation, through the medium of toasts, at our good supper, that the family believed such a romance, did not deceive me, either; and, in plain words, I conjectured we were in Mr. Linnock's house, with Mr. Linnock's knowledge, and with that of his matronly wife and his clever daughters to boot, to say nothing of his servants, of doubtful, amphibious character; nor did I fully credit the anecdote of the absence of that gentleman in London, on business; no, nor believe in my heart of hearts, that the silk evening dresses of the Misses Linnock had paid, out and out, our good King's duty.

And why not communicate my suspicions to Alexander? For a reason that ought to be somewhat obvious, dear Graves. Did he believe that he has been and is entertained in a smuggler's stronghold — by that smuggler's family — and all in league with the men who have dared to deprive him of his liberty, his sense of duty, as the King's officer, if not any other delicacy, would immediately suggest to him the necessity of cutting himself off from all friendly or social intercourse with Miss Eliza, her sister, her mother, and every one under her roof, and — since prisoner he must be — of holding himself reserved, and stern, and resentful, confined to his room perhaps, and, in fact, passing a very disagreeable time of it; and why need I enlighten him only to make him miserable, particularly when his delusion not only helps to cheer his lot, but also saves him from the imputation of acting wrong, in allowing himself to be amused? Besides, I own an unwillingness to expose our kind hostesses to the future inconvenience which must result from his knowledge of what they are in the eyes of the law, and of all men-o'-war's men on the coast. Let him find out, at his leisure, if he can, that he has been asking little favours of a smuggler's younger daughter; I shall not be his informant: certainly not now; and I *do* farther confess a hope that Mr. Linnock and his amiable family may never be dropped, by open discovery, and close searching under the roof at present over us — into the talons of his Majesty's exchequer: so venial are their sins in my eyes. I

wish, however, without robbing them, that I had the value, in good current coin, of the smuggled goods, "heavy" and "light," now in one house with me.

So, when I confirmed Alexander in his thought of the unmanliness of telling Miss Eliza that she was imposed upon — innocent girl! — by the story of his having been seconded by me in a duel with a rival, upon a lady's account, you see I *had* more reasons for my disingenuousness than apprehension, called up by a recollection of the young and truly unsuspecting Lady Ellen. And yet, to save her from a discovery of what an unfit retreat her friends have chosen for her, while she is yet in it, and surrounded by the most disagreeable evidences of its unfitness, alone would certainly make me avoid all debate of the question likely to reach her ears. And upon this follows a resolution as to the future.

I *must* now make it my business to ascertain her name, and the residence of her friends, in the view of putting them, by some indirect hint, upon their guard against continuing her where she is. Meantime, let us return to our journal.

Alexander, after his useless appeal to the men and lads in the stable, led the way into the garden. It was a spacious one, though not tastily arranged, the upper part of it being devoted to flowers, the lower crowded with substantial vegetables. The flowers, however, seemed well taken care of, and among them were some rare ones; but that is not the subject at present. We found high walls on every side of us here also: I helped your brother to climb one of them at the most practicable point, and by his conversation with certain individuals on the outside, I learned that it would be superfluous for him to jump over. Indeed, we tried a similar experiment, with the same results, at two or three other places in the garden; nay, we lifted the latch of a chinky, crazy, old oak-door, which led into an extensive orchard, and still there were four walls around us, and sentinels abroad watching them.

"Then I'll go make up my pretty little quarrel with Miss Eliza," said Alexander: "will you join me, Mutford?"

"No; you want no second in that affair. I will stroll away an hour among these groves of pear, apple, and cherry trees," I said.

"Then help me to something uncommonly handsome to begin upon with her."

"Ask her to twine your fetters all over and over with roses."

"The very thing! — my fetters all over and over with roses;" and he left me to pursue a new thought concerning him and his present situation which had just begun to come into my head.

"It is not merely to insure Sam Geeson against being prosecuted for riotous and disorderly conduct that we are kept here," said I to myself; "much esteemed as the youth may be, such formidable measures would not be lavished upon that consideration; stop, — is there never another lugger to run in? or was that which we half-surprised the other night quite 'worked' before we came up?"

For some time I dwelt upon these suspicions: the lodgers in the house then re-occurred to me, and my surprise rose higher and higher, at finding such an individual as the young Lady Ellen sent into such a retirement. Why had not her friends put her under the more seemly protection of persons of her own rank? Did they wish to hide her, as well as to banish her from among them? And what cause but one could she have given for such mingled severity, unkindness, and mystery? Or what could possibly be their object, but to cut off the pursuit of some lover unworthy of her, but whom she could not consent to forsake? Yes, another surmise half arose to my mind, but I flung it off in a rage against myself for allowing it to tempt me; it was, however, — no, I will not breathe it; not of such a creature.

Through an opening among the fruit-trees I caught, over the garden-wall, a picturesque view of the upper part of Mr. Linnock's patched and piebald old mansion, with hills behind it, and light and shadow so playing upon the whole as to form a tolerably good subject for a sketch. And I longed to sketch it; and assuring myself that Miss Eliza, the owner of an elegant rosewood writing-desk,

and of a shell glass-case, and half owner of a grand piano, could accommodate me with a scrap of drawing-paper and a black-lead pencil, I went into the house to see. Nor was I disappointed: it interrupted her *tête-à-tête* with your brother only half a minute to put these matters into my hands, and I returned to the orchard, sat down on the grass, and began my outline.

I must have been at work some time, for I had nearly done the sketch, finishing it pretty highly too, when I heard female voices near me, though I could not see the speakers. The accents of one were grave, impressive, consoling, and tender, alternately; those of the other complaining and sad. I had not time to listen long before they became visible to me, having cleared the groups of trees at first between us, and I saw Mrs. Planche and Lady Ellen walking slowly, arm in arm. My eyes became immediately riveted on my drawing. They must have quickly observed me, for they suddenly stopped speaking, and, I believe, walking too. Presently, however, I heard the soft noise of their feet in the grass, and they approached me, Mrs. Planche asking permission to look at my sketch. I got up, bowing profoundly, I believe, and holding the paper in one hand and my hat in the other. Much praise of my pencil then met my ear; and the plaudits of one of my critics, and her voice while she vouchsafed them, made me almost swear to give up the tragic for the graphic muse during my present endeavours to earn money by my wits. Graves, do *you* think me a first-rate artist?

Hitherto I had scarce looked into her face; she sighed wofully, and then I glanced up. Her arm was round Mrs. Planche's neck, who held the drawing, her head touching the good lady's shoulders, and tears trembled under her downcast lids, as she intently observed my production. She sighed again, and, almost in a continuation of the exquisite sound, said, "Very beautiful, indeed, dear Planche; how like what poor Augustus used to do!"

No matter what had been my ridiculous feelings, this tender praising of another man because *I* drew prettily soon changed them into gall; and I knew not what I was

going to say or do, when dear Planche, seemingly as much inconvenienced as I was, though in a different way, by the allusion to poor Augustus, rapidly remarked, — "Yes, my love, — but come, come," — and then handing me my drawing, and returning thanks, in which Lady Ellen joined, she led the imprudent reminiscent rather abruptly to the garden. They were not out of hearing, however, before the young mourner allowed another expressive sentence to reach my attentive ears. "Oh, Planche, where have they sent *him?* and will they never let us see each other again?" and then I am sure I heard a fit of weeping.

You may be assured that these words, not to talk of finishing my sketch, fully kept me occupied till dinner-time, so that Alexander had a clear stage for me. There was now no doubt that I had been right in the mildest at least of my conjectures of the cause of offence given by the gentle recluse to her family; and will you believe that I imagined myself as angry with her as any one of them could have been, accordingly? Yes, you will believe it of me, for you begin to know me: to know of what a shaking together of the odds and ends of all human inconsistencies Michael Mutford is compounded.

But was this all I have had to puzzle me and keep me oscillating yesterday? No, indeed. Something happened at dinner, or rather immediately after dinner, which then utterly surpassed, and now utterly surpasseth, my comprehension.

"Mr. Mutford, Mr. Mutford!" repeated Miss Eliza Linnock, after your brother had asked me to take wine — ('t was white hermitage, Graves, worthy of the house we were in) — "Mutford — Mutford," she went on, thoughtfully pausing; and here I observed that her lodgers looked attentively at me, and expressively at each other: "Mutford — Mutford! — excuse me, sir, on so slight an acquaintance, — but, — any thing to the Mutfords of Hastings or Brighton, pray?" (honest smugglers, I reckon.)

Pardoning the little impertinence — for I believe I have not courage enough to resent those kind of freedoms — I answered that I did not think I had any relations so far south in England.

"Oh, then, sir, we may call you a North Briton? I guessed as much, once or twice, from a slight peculiarity in your accent."

"Not quite so far north, either," I said, "though I admit the slight peculiarity in my accent: I am a Yorkshireman."

"Of a Yorkshire family, sir?" demanded Lady Ellen, almost out of breath.

"Yes, madam; the Mutfords of (*once upon a time*) Mutford Abbey."

With a whispered but earnest expression of surprise and interest, she turned to her elderly friend; I caught a cautionary glance and action, though the latter was scarce perceptible, directed by that person to her; she checked herself; bent her head; grew very pale — she had been very red; and a few minutes after both ladies withdrew.

Now, Graves, expound me that. I have laid it under my pillow, and cogitated it, and queried it, almost the whole of the last livelong night, and can make nothing out of it, positively nothing: not as much as the shadow of a surmise. Why should Michael Mutford, sometime of Mutford Abbey, Yorkshire, startle, and make red and white, and banish from her dessert, Lady Ellen — *whom?* That's the plain question. Or, rather, there are two questions in one for you. Who is she that I interest, that I am something to, — I know not what? Dear Augustus, unknown to myself, in a state of transmigration? *or* what? — or have I had a dear friend in him, and has he made his ears familiar with my name and my praises? Let me think. No. The only Augustus I ever knew personally was Augustus Cæsar, our poor old black, who followed us from the West Indies; and he could not have been — before he died, last winter, of a rheumatic fever — the Othello of this gentle Desdemona.

In earnest, Graves, the circumstance much engrosses me, and you will not wonder. And I will find her out, — that I am determined upon; ay, although she and her female Mentor have not appeared at supper last night, nor at breakfast this morning; and although the Misses Lin-

nock now plainly indicate that they had rather not discourse of their lodger by name, having their tongues tied up — (who could imagine it possible!) by some arrangement with her avoiding family.

I 'll tell you, Graves. I do think that I have a kind of right, — at least, am rather at liberty, without getting myself deeply entangled in the hateful silk gossamer meshes of delicacy, — to request to be informed by what means Lady Ellen Unknown has become aware of my existence; or why a man of my name being alive seems to frighten her away from table. And so, upon the very next tolerable opportunity — by the fates and the mysteries, and I have such a one already! — this moment they pass arm and arm into the garden; I am after them.

* * * * *

Returned from the garden, dear Graves; have addressed her, have been answered, and stand more confounded than ever. Is she mad? Horrible, horrible suspicion! Yet, *is* she — and is her strange seclusion and separation from her family, whoever they are, thus accounted for? Or upon what other grounds can I solve the earnest though vaguely expressed — and by me not at all understood — notions which she has taken up with respect to me?

The whole thing has not lasted five minutes: I saw her and her companion as soon as I entered the garden; and they saw me at the same instant, for their eyes turned to me very expressively. Then Lady Ellen bent her looks on the ground, standing still, and holding Mrs. Planche's arm tight, so as to keep her stationary also. I walked up to them in some agitation, I suppose, saluted them at a little distance, and before we were quite close together began, —

"May I take the liberty, madam ——"

"Mr. Mutford," she interrupted, "do not, pray do not address *me* in that cold deferential manner; it pains me, indeed it does; do not talk of taking liberties; do not fear, — think, I mean, — you can do so in any thing you choose to say, even though I decline answering, for the present, all you may say; for it is I who ought to defer to you, to be in awe of you, while we converse a moment

together: however, sir," she went on in a hurried manner, catching her breath, I standing a model for Katerfelto, "it may be better not to propose any questions to me until a future occasion, much better. I believe I know what you wish to ask about, and that 's the reason I request, supplicate your forbearance; — pray hear me out; — there can be no harm in *my* asking a question of *you*, and I am sure you will reply to me; will you not, sir?"

I stammered out something.

"Thanks, much obliged to you; here is my question, then, for you."

And here it is for *you*, Graves; and what think you of it?

"How is that excellent and injured man, your father?"

I said he had long been ill, but I hoped was gradually getting better.

"Oh, I am very glad to hear you say so; will you allow me to go on? You have a sister, Mr. Mutford? a good, charming, enchanting creature, I am told; and she, too, — is she well?"

Again I answered as aptly as I knew, or rather felt how.

"It gives me great and real pleasure to be told that, also; and now, sir, a last freedom, — where does your family reside at present?"

I named the village for her, the street, the very house. She looked, — if her looks mean any thing — if, I repeat, they convey any thing in excitement but the vague glitter of madness, — she looked much astonished, perhaps a little alarmed, and exchanged a long and deep regard with her companion, then ended thus, —

"Well, sir, good-by; we may meet again, — if I live, with God's help, we *shall* meet again, — and I will pray to be made known to your sister, and ask her to love me, that is, after she has forgiven me; and you, too, Mr. Mutford, and your father; — oh, I could kneel to your father! Farewell, sir; think as well of me as you can, and ask your family to do the same; and of poor Augustus, too; indeed, sir, *we* have never consciously injured you or yours, and that may be proved some day.

Bless you, Mr. Mutford!" — Graves! she held out her hand to me — "and pray, pray do not insist on knowing my name while you stay in this house!" and she walked rapidly out of the garden.

As I stood gazing, and, I suppose, gaping after her, Mrs. Planche added a few words, which completed my consternation.

"Mr. Mutford," she said, laying her hand on my arm, and looking up into my face, "be prudent, and take nothing for more than its just value;" and she, too, parted quickly away from me.

Now, Graves, what need I add to this? particularly as Miss Eliza has given me three summonses to dinner. Will her lodgers, or, I suppose, boarders rather, appear at table?

* * * * *

No, they keep their apartments: "Lady Ellen is a little indisposed," and, I suppose, will meet me no more. So I must get out of this house as fast as possible, in order to discover who she is; — confound the smugglers! when, though? I have no more to say to you to-night, dear Graves, except it be right to inform you that Alexander and I have twice vainly repeated our attempts at the gate and the walls, in the course of the day and evening. Yes, I will own to his brother, that since my suspicions of the master-motives for keeping him here have sprung up in my mind, I suffer considerable uneasiness at a question often put to me by my conscience and my honour, — "Michael, why don't you communicate your bodings to Lieutenant Graves of the blockade service? Is not your silence something like aiding and abetting smugglers in their conspiracy and contrivances to throw him off his guard, and keep him from his duty?"

I can only answer, — "May I not be wrong in my suspicions?" and then come in all my former good arguments for holding my tongue — or nearly all. And on one little point I have enlightened him, — ay, the instant after it began to gleam in my own brain, which was but a few hours ago, — and utterly stupid have we both been not to have seen it long ago, — "Lieutenant Graves," said I,

" it just strikes me, that the constables and the magistrate must have applied at your tower for the body of Samuel Geeson, early upon the morning after his arrest ; and your men would have had no power to detain him, you know ; and so, if the magistrate may not have happened to have remanded him, till your appearance as prosecutor ——"

" The rascal is now at large, and has been, since yesterday morning ! But, if so, — recollecting that as it was only as hostages for him we were kidnapped, — if so, why are you and I prisoners still ?"

" That 's nearly the question I want you to consider," I replied. He looked thoughtful, and reddened slightly. I left him, as night began to fall, and as Miss Eliza fluttered in to shine upon him instead of the day, first, to pen a few lines for you, dear Graves ; and, second, — and now that I have done — to steal out into the garden, in what hope you will conjecture. So, farewell for to-night, if I meet no one, — till after supper, if I do.

XII.

* * * *

Wednesday morning — at home in my own little writing chamber.

I *did* meet some one in the garden, Graves, and some one else, too, and another body, to boot, and perhaps another still, to be candid and particular with you. But neither of those whom I had gone out to meet. And yet, persons that keep me thinking a good deal.

Within the circles of time (goes it not so ?) and of place, there are points in wait, as it were, for every one of us, from the moment of our birth — nay from *their* birth, the creation of time and of place — to mark the era and the whereabouts of that one event which, above all others, shall mould and stamp future destiny. But this is only putting an old common-place — indeed a hoary-headed adage, almost — in my own convolved words, you will say. No matter, since you understand me. Here is what I farther mean : — that, the moment I entered Mr. Linnock's house, *I* gained *my* points of time and place, for the hereafter, I cannot help thinking. For reasons you have heard, for

others you shall hear — if you may *heed* them — I cannot help it.

I have told you that, when I stole into the garden yesterevening, night was falling. For some time I walked slowly up and down the least cleared, in fact, the grass-grown walks running among the vegetables at the end adjoining the orchard. Here my step must have fallen lightly, so as not to have alarmed any one who might be even rather close at hand. Traversing the path which went directly by the old chinky orchard-door, I fancied I heard low and cautious voices, and thinking only of one person, I trod on tip-toe to the door, and looked through one of its rents.

A man of tall stature, great breadth of shoulders, and respectably habited, stood with his back to me: he was not two yards distant from the door. Facing him, and of course me, was the girl, Martha Huggett. It was their voices I had heard. They continued speaking in a subdued key. For some instants, my slight agitation at seeing them hindered me from distinguishing their words, and the technicality of not a few of their phrases might also have helped to confuse me. In a little time, however, after regulating my breathings, and steadying myself in my position, I was able to overhear something like the following: —

"Yes, my maiden, though I can be sorry enough for the old man's accident, it has told well for one Lilly White; you couldn't have quizzed Hood out of the round so easily as the young 'un they sent in his place; and by that reckoning, the Miss Molly might have had more coasting holidays than she can afford."

"'T is you, I believe, sir; but don't forget what I 've just been a-saying of; Lilly ought not to cross over the way no more; there be too much danger."

"Why, yes; he had but a short run for it to the lugger t' other night, Martha, and trouble enough to make shore since; and I know as well as you can tell me, that he could do as much, if not more good, staying at home to prepare storage for the things; but what is he to do without a sharp 'un to chaffer with the Parleys across the briney? 'T was all very well while the young Don took a trip in his stead; d' you think we're to see any more of that chap, my maid?"

"Hardly: he be too well looked after at present, and the doctor gives leave for it, you know."

"All nons'ns; the Don has no more need of doctor's stuff on that score than you have, Martha, let people say as they like for their own views."

"Besides, sir, he never took to t'other trade from love or liking for it, but just because it came in his way that night we met him out from home without a hat, and he jumped at any thing to vex the great 'uns."

"Well, Martha, he has done t'other trade some good, however, if he only holds staunch now; though I sometimes fear he may have already got sorry and blown us."

"Never you mind, *Mr. Linnock*," (I started, Graves, but something that soon followed confounded me quite,) —"to-morrow, or after, he *may* peach, though I be blessed if I fear it; yesterday, or to-day, I will be upon oath he has not said a word to harm us."

"How are you so sure, my little maid?"

"Think a minute, and you've no call to ax, sir. Who managed to have your house favourably spoken of when they were in want of respectable board and lodging for the lady?"

"The Don, certainly."

"And why your house, Mr. Linnock?"

"Why, because he knew they wanted to part him and her, and if the lady got here, he could see her, unknown to them, now and then; and so,—oh, yes, I've a notion of what you drive at now, Martha,—*she* is with us still."

"To be sure; and if he had gone to blab all, sir, she would be somewhere else; but it be time the apprentice were with us, too, Mr. Linnock: the night's dark enough now for trying to work the good 'uns we couldn't touch t'other time, when the new blue-jacket came up. You saw all right, sir, about the spot, a while ago?"

"Ay, my maid; or I couldn't be talking here with you, you know; and no time has been lost since between master mate and me, to clear away, up stairs; so that, as you say, we only wait for news from the apprentice — and hush — isn't that he?"

"It be," assented Martha, as a low and cautious whistle sounded outside the garden wall.

"Come along, my lad," said Mr. Linnock, whistling in answer. A man's head soon appeared over the wall at the far end of the orchard: the next instant I saw Samuel Geeson cautiously stealing through the fruit trees. His carpenter's dress revealed him to me almost at the first glance.

Mr. Linnock and Martha Huggett moved to meet him: the trio stood still some distance from the door, and I could not catch their words. Yielding to my curiosity, I put my ear to a chink: my position thus became an awkward one; I lost my balance, stumbled, came with force against the door, burst it open—perhaps it had not even been latched—and fell on my hands and knees among the grass in the orchard.

"Hollo!" whispered Mr. Linnock—"hollo!" echoed the apprentice, and they helped me up directly. Martha Huggett disappeared, I know not whether into the gardens or among the orchard-trees.

"What do you please to want on my premises this time of night, sir?" asked Linnock.

"Eh? ah?" queried Geeson, peering close into my face; "why it be one of 'em from the house."

"Mr. Mutford?" continued Linnock: "excuse me, sir; but though you have been my guest, as I am given to understand since my return from town, this is the first time we have met, you know—at least to my knowledge—and I have but just returned, and, indeed, not yet shown myself to my family; but I hope they make you comfortable, Mr. Mutford; and I am sorry to hear that some people——"

"I say, Mr. Linnock," interrupted Geeson, touching my host's elbow, after he had studiously watched my face during this polite speech, delivered by a man of a certain gentility, and even grace of manner, too, and of a prepossessing expression of features, although, so well as I could decide in the dark, those features were remarkably lumpy, and went to make up one of the blackest complexioned countenances I had ever seen. He instantly turned an ear to Sam, who whispered him. They withdrew a step or two from me,

but between me and the orchard door. I saw Mr. Linnock become thoughtful: he bent his large, black head, listening attentively, and once glanced at me. In a few moments he came to my side again, Geeson standing aloof.

"Well, Mr. Mutford."

"Well, Mr. Linnock; I am as thankful as you know I ought to be for the hospitality of your excellent family:" —there was a shade of emphasis in my words. He looked steadily upon me. Meeting his eyes, I slightly smiled to give him his cue, and he took it promptly.

"You are a gentleman, Mr. Mutford: tell me one thing, on the word of a gentleman. Were you long at that door before you fell in to us here?"

"I will save you another question," I replied, "by the plainness of my answer — I was; and long enough to hear a good deal that you and Martha Huggett said together."

"Martha Huggett?" he repeated, in feigned or real surprise, either as if he wanted to deny all knowledge of a person of that name, or queried how *I* could have gained a knowledge of her.

"Yes, indeed," I went on: "Martha Huggett, who came to Lieutenant Graves's tower, to exhort him to head all his men down to the Anchor the other night, and afterwards was despatched by Lilly White to engage hands among some of us at the Anchor door."

"Lilly White?" he again repeated, in tones of increasing simplicity.

"Lilly White," I repeated in my turn, taking off my hat, and bowing profoundly to his inveterately black beard, whiskers, eyebrows, hair, and, if the darkness did not deceive me, skin. When I recovered my upright position, our eyes again met, very intelligently, and a second time I smiled, but he was still posed and watchful. "Come," I continued, "let me set you at rest, if, indeed, you can value the words of a gentleman — I mean you no harm. I have had a notion, since I came here, how matters stood on every side of us, and yet it has not occurred to me to make others as wise as myself; now I am sure of more than I was before I strolled into the garden this evening, and still ——"

"Mr. Mutford, *was* it the act of the gentleman you insist you are, and promise you will be, to ——" so far Mr. Linnock got in his interruption; I finished the sentence.

"To listen to you and Martha at the door? Mr. Linnock, my good sir, you must forgive me that. My situation *was* a doubtful, if not a perilous one; at the mercy of your liege men — mark, I do not say it *is*, now that I have placed myself under the protection of a gentleman whose fame ——" I was bowing down to my knees again: he smiled at last, nay, chuckled, and took my arm, while he said, —

"Enough of it, enough of it, Mr. Mutford, — here, out of doors, I mean, — but I request the pleasure of your company in the house — Sam"— the apprentice joined us — "say, very well, and *that old girl* will take a run as soon as the Lieutenant bids us good-night, for the round — go along, now."

Looking rather puzzled, perhaps, at receiving his message in my presence, Geeson, after a moment's pause, disappeared among the trees. Mr. Linnock again pressed me to accompany him towards his dwelling. I agreed. He led me cautiously into the garden; there peered round him to every side; approached its door; avoided it, however, and turned to a corner of the garden near the back wall of the house. I saw him look down observantly at what seemed to me only one of the oblong little flower-beds, edged with box. He took a kind of grappling-iron out of his pocket; fastened it in the edge that defined, at that place, the gravelled walk upon which we stood; pulled with some effort, in a bent posture; the flower-bed moved to him, leaving its other three borders of box stationary; and I was soon edified with the sight of a few stone steps descending into the wide aperture then disclosed, a dull lamp burning at their foot.

"This is the way into the house, for the present, sir," he said; "will you step down?"

"We are going to visit the store-rooms?" I asked, hesitating a little, I believe.

"Some of them may come in our way," he replied;

" for when obliged to decline any company I may not like, in the parlour, I am not ashamed to spend a little time among my goods."

" Show the way, then, for I fully rely on you," I rejoined, following him.

" You may, sir, when I do the same by you ;" and Mr. Linnock restored the innocent flowers to their places, over our heads, descended the steps, and took up the dull lamp.

I found myself in a narrow passage of solid stone-work. We trod softly onward, and arrived at a small oak door, strongly bolted, and also locked, as was proved to me by Mr. Linnock opening it with a small and curious key, selected from a bunch, of which none were much larger or less remarkably shaped. Passing the door, he locked it again on the inside, and shot other bolts, and now we were at the bottom of a second flight of stone steps, more numerous, however, than those leading from the garden, and much narrower. We ascended, perhaps, thirty of them, and stood in a kind of corridor, tiled, and running to a great distance, at either hand, and, I thought, turning off at angles, in the remote darkness. Upon the walls were shelves well stocked with bales, great and small ; and no more than room for one person to walk forward was left on the floor, so abundant was the rich smuggler's stock of " heavy articles," or " good 'uns," or, in still plainer English, small tubs of eau-de-vie and hollands. Mr. Linnock held up his lamp and passed it from right to left, over his head, looking gravely at me.

" I know," I said, " one of the store-rooms, or the beginning of one : — pray, do we now stand under the roof of your hospitable house ? "

My conductor gave me to understand that we did. " This," he added, laying his hand on the wall to our right, " this is the outer wall of my house."

" And *this*," I said, laying my hand on the confronting one, " is what ignorant people, dwelling inside, suppose to be *that ?* "

He nodded assent. I proceeded to demand if his warerooms had any communication with the more inhabited

apartments of his mansion, and he informed me that most certainly they had not. We resumed our progress, and arrived at one of the points where I had supposed that the passage continued at an angle, but I found I had deceived myself; it ended in a straight line, and a step-ladder now invited us to mount higher up. Again I was curious enough to enquire if we could traverse, in this manner, the whole extent of the house; but I ought to have foreseen the silliness of the question; and he enabled me to do so, by remarking, that a secret passage like this, could be contrived with perfect avoidance of suspicion, inside the gable wall alone, where it would not have to encounter the windows which afforded light to the interior of the edifice. To make up for the want of extent, in a continued line, however, I found, after ascending the step-ladder I have mentioned, a second corridor, of dimensions equal to the first — nay, by means of another ladder, a third; and still goods met my eye, in great quantities, and I doubted not, of great value.

At the foot of yet another ladder, Mr. Linnock left his sad lamp, for a flood of brilliant light, falling through the square orifice we were now about to climb to, rendered its meagre aid no longer necessary. And when we had mounted into the immediate influence of this light, I found myself in a passage nearly three times as wide as those we had left below, with the bare joists and tiles of the house over our heads, two chairs and a table in a clear space, among heaps and a litter of bales and packages; a comfortable bed at either end of the apartment — as I suppose I must call it — large account books on shelves, and a glass lamp of great magnitude hanging by a chain from the roof. "Here, on a level with the hattocks," observed Mr. Linnock, still whispering, "we thought we could poach a little more room without suspicion, than we durst venture on lower down in the house, as a private bed might be necessary, of an odd time."

"Your establishment is very complete," I remarked, "and must have cost you some money."

"A trifle, Mr. Mutford; but it pays, sir; it pays, I thank Heaven."

"Has it yet been visited by any one you didn't care to see in it?"

"No, indeed, sir, though such like folk as you mean have now and then been inside in the house."

"Do you never fear that a secret, necessarily confided to a great many, may be divulged to your disadvantage?"

"It is not confided to a great many, Mr. Mutford; along with my wife and daughters, and my brothers, there is but one friend of t' other trade could find out that flower-bed in the garden for you."

"Martha Huggett?"

"You have a guess, sir."

"She must be paid well for her fidelity and general good services."

"Why, yes; but as much out of liking as to bribe her, and the little girl would be true if she gained less — 'tis in her; I call her a downright good 'un, Mr. Mutford; besides, she has her own reasons for doing her best for t' other trade; she loves none that don't love it."

"Pray tell me her reasons."

"With all my heart; but take a chair, sir; and as I keep you from supper below ——" he did not end the sentence in words, contenting himself with extracting a bottle of champagne from a cupboard, laying glasses, untwisting the wire, nicking the cord, touching the cork, and helping me to a glass; and when he had pledged me in another, Mr. Linnock continued,——

"Little Martha, you see, sir, kept company, ever since she was a girl of fourteen, with a young man of the village, an honest, respectable lad, and one I liked; and I will say for him, as clever a hand on the shingles of a dark night, and plenty of work to do, as ever I had in pay. Well, sir, the Miss Molly was seen too near shore one evening, and though she got off clear, — as has always been her fortune, I thank Providence, — there was a bit of a row between some men-o'-war's men and a few of our lads, and Fred fetched one of the blue-jackets what I call rather a nasty knuckle somewhere between the eyes; and they had him up for it, and the judge said he ought to be hanged, because, d'you see, sir, another man-o'-war's man happened to have been shot at."

" And as the judge is generally a good opinion in these cases," I said, " hanged Master Fred *was*, I presume?"

" Why no, sir, not out-an'-out. Interest was made, and an excellent character — not better than he deserved — given of Fred; and the Irishman — these rough-an'-ready chaps on the coast be almost all Paddies, Mr. Mutford — he recovered from the shot, which was a mere nothing to talk about, and none of Fred's business into the bargain; and so they forgave him the swinging, and sent him to Van's land for fourteen years; and that's why Martha Huggett has no demur to lend a hand, now and then, to t' other trade, sir."

" And I don't wonder, if she loved poor Fred."

" Loved him better than her own eyes, and he her the same: they were to have been married the very day he sailed, sir; and 't is for love to him that Martha has refused many a good offer since, and never goes for a walk with our boys, like other girls of her age; and I'm mistaken if she don't be off after him some day, and soon; only waiting to grow richer, I fancy."

" Very disinterested of her not to weigh the odium of marrying him against her preference for him."

" Odium? as how, Mr. Mutford?"

" Why, he is a transported convict."

" To be sure, as they call it, so he is: but bless you, sir, we see no odium in that, here on the coast, when it comes only of our lawful business. Had Fred robbed, or cheated, or committed any one crime, why then 't would be another thing, you know; but it isn't his fault, is it, if people *will* punish him, just as if he had, Mr. Mutford? Odium! — I should like to hear Martha talk of that, and her own brother come home from a seven years' trip only the other day. For that matter, few of the honestest families in her street have escaped ('t is a dangerous trade, sir, is t' other trade, now and then,) — escaped bad treatment on the same account. People call me a fortunate man, Mr. Mutford, and I don't mean to deny as much; but I myself (allow me to fill for you, sir,) — I have a brother abroad these thirteen years, and he's to stay abroad for life, they say."

" And perhaps *your* chief motive for trading with the

Miss Molly has been supplied by their harsh conduct towards that brother, Mr. Linnock ?"

This harmless question produced a surprising change in the smuggler. Hitherto my regards had been fixed on a face, (the blackest, even in the full light of the lamp, as well as the broadest, and in every way the largest, I had ever seen among that race of mankind called white,) of which the heavy brows, small eyes, pursy forehead, and wide, thick-lipped mouth, presented only a plodding, in-earnest, dullishly-clever, (will you accept the compound ?) and absolutely honest expression. Now Mr. Linnock suddenly raised his immense head, opened his eyes, allowed his brows to descend slowly into a scowl, and drew in his lips and shut them hardly, ere he replied to me in two words only — " No, sir."

" Do not let me innocently hurt you or offend you," I said : " I withdraw my question, if it is too free."

" 'T is not too free, Mr. Mutford, since we sit here together ; it does not offend me ; and if it hurts me, that's no fault of yours. But I tell you, No, sir : — it was not the misfortune of the brother I 've spoken of — he left me since I began the trade ; — no ; — but I have another brother, an honest shopkeeper at Brighton, and he had to do with it, though not a great deal. He came this way, after meeting a small trader down at the village — the most considerable man of his day, however ; and my brother had a good lot of light articles on his person and in his trunk, that night when we gave him a bed. Well, he was followed to my house, the goods seized, and he and I both fined a sum beyond our ability to pay. I was nothing but a farmer then ; ay, and a struggling one ; and my wife poorly, and my two girls infants. They sold every thing on my fields, live and dead stock, and growing crop, and every thing under my roof, to my wife's bed, and my little girls' cradles ; and, to make an end of it, put me in gaol for the balance of the fine, which all I was worth in the world would not discharge. And *that* was what did it, Mr. Mutford ! I got out among them at last, after being on my oath to myself that I would have back what they took from me — and I had ; ay, and what they took from

my Brighton brother, too. If ever you go to that town, look out for his shop, and when you get into it, Mr. Mutford, look about you. 'T is as richly stocked as any shop in Brighton; and he has ten times as much as what you can see, waiting for a turn; and every article under his roof is — smuggled. And 'tis a good joke to meet the great people you do sometimes meet buying of him; ladies, and of an odd time one or two, perhaps, that are too high even to be called 'your Ladyship:' ha, ha, Mr. Mutford, I 've lived to see all that, and thank them for it;" and the bitterness and roughness of Mr. Linnock's short laugh told me the revengeful triumph of his heart.

"Is Sam Geeson a favourite of yours?" I asked. He nearly relapsed into his usual manner and character of face, while he answered, "Um — hardly; but we want the chap often; and his liking for the trade makes us sure of him. He is no credit to us, however; and I don't want you to praise *his* reasons for getting in among us, Mr. Mutford."

I requested my host to be more explicit.

"Why, the truth is, the apprentice took to t' other trade at first, after breaking the cage for a little matter of poaching: but I won't be so hard on him neither; *they* were too much so, p'raps: he says, himself, it was only a rabbit, and that he knocked it on the head one night that his old mother had no supper, and nothing in the house for next day's dinner either; and you 'll try at it a long time, sir, before you'll make Sam sure that he has not a bit of a right to the four-footed creatures that run wild for every man to catch if he can, as it were; not the same as a horse, or a cow, or a sheep, that you buy and sell, and spend money to feed. But no matter for that. He was but a great boy, then, just articled to a carpenter, and the accident quite turned his mind from living at home with his mother; so we let him do what he could aboard the Miss Moily, for a trip or two, till the gentlefolk forgave him; and then he did not go home as good a boy as we found him: for, you see, sir, if a chap *will* turn out bad, the t' other trade gives him opportunities, as well as any other. And it was after he had been some time at work

among shavings again, that Sam did something worse than chase a rabbit or a hare, to make him run off to the Miss Molly a second time."

"No act of real dishonesty, I hope?"

"A girl took her oath before the magistrates that he was her child's father, sir: the parish was after him; and so he came back to us."

"Did he dispute the girl's assertion?"

"No, sir; but he must either have married her, or supported her and the child without, or gone to the tread-mill, you know."

"Well, and he *is* a scoundrel, indeed, for not marrying her at once."

"Sam does not think so, sir, nor the girl either. If he married her, with only one child, the parish would not be bound to relieve them, and they could not get, between them, enough for a living — not without very hard work, of one kind or another, at least — and neither he nor she are in love with that. But I believe it is agreed between Sam and her to marry — *when she shall be a mother a second time — for with two children the parish* MUST *take them.*"

"Yes," I said, "that is the law, I know; and do not you think, Mr. Linnock, that this same law must be of great assistance to Sam's notions of morality?"

The smuggler, as if taken completely out of his element, did not answer; no, nor even smile; but merely gave me a nonplused shake of his massive head.

"And I know something of Sam's sweetheart," I resumed.

"You do, sir; but, if I may make so free, the less you or your friends know of her in future the better: I don't talk altogether on Sam's account; but she's not what I call a good 'un."

I thanked the honest smuggler, assuring him that we had got a good character with the girl, and having come quite strangers into the village, could only go by what was told us. But do you remember my former objections to Miss Lucy, Graves?

Again I changed the subject with my kind host.

"Come now, Mr. Linnock, I have but a few more questions to trouble you with at present; and, first, who is *The Don?*"

He looked steadily — too steadily — at me, with the same expression I had noticed in the orchard. I returned his studious stare without shrinking. And thus we sat silently, for a minute, and at last he was pleased to speak.

"Mr. Mutford, after what you happened to hear at the orchard door, I have been forced to trust you, for my own sake, many steps farther than you then gained on us. Since we sat down here, I have been hoping I might trust you for your own sake. You want to have your last question answered; ay, and as you gave notice, other questions after it; and if you knew but all, it concerns you much to be dealt openly with about the Don, and — for I guess your mind, sir — the lady in the house, too. Let me take a liberty — but a well-meant one — you also want the means of righting yourself, and your father, and your sister, Mr. Mutford — don't look astonished, sir, for I know something of all that: in plain English, sir, you want money, and plenty of it; and now let me make an end. If you close with a bargain I should like to drive with you, you *shall* be told all you ought to know about the Don and the lady; and you *shall* have money, and plenty of it: to say nothing of — of —"

"Freeing myself of all suspicions of hinting at any of the late information which I have been so fortunate as to acquire;" I added for him, reading the thought plainly on his brow, and in his tones and manner.

"Why, yes; even that, Mr. Mutford."

"To go on methodically, then. What is the bargain you wish to drive?"

"Since you heard Martha and me speak of the Don, sir, you also heard us say that he used to be useful to us?"

"Yes, as a kind of respectable representative of commerce on the other side of the Channel."

"That 's it. But we have lost sight of him, and want as good a man in his stead."

"And pay me the compliment of thinking I might serve our turn?"

"Yes, Mr. Mutford; and I like this plain way of doing business."

"Then to humour your liking, Mr. Linnock, I answer, just as plainly, that the thing can't be: keep your secret of the Don and the lady; I must try to get at it some other way: and keep your money, too; and *that*, too, I will try for some other way."

"Now you are offended, Mr. Mutford."

"Not I, on my conscience, Mr. Linnock."

"But you mean what you say, sir?"

"To the letter."

"Out and out?"

"Out and out."

"Won't even think it over?"

"With a view to debate it — no."

"The Don *was* a gentleman, sir."

"I make no doubt."

"And not of your mind."

"I can't help him."

"Well, Mr. Mutford:" his eyes fell, and again I saw on his brow that which it concerned perhaps even my personal comforts, if not safety (notwithstanding all our interchange of confidence), to reply to forthwith.

"And well, Mr. Linnock. Now you begin to ask yourself over again, what security you have against a breach of confidence on my part?" — he did not say a word, nor move his eyes from the table. "I will tell you. Along with the word of a man who has never consciously broken his word, my refusal in my present situation — I mean my situation at this moment — my blunt refusal of an offer from you, by a seeming acceptance of which — and mark you, the seeming alone would answer my purposes — I could insure your permission to return home to my sick father and my unprotected sister, without suspicion of any kind. Measure, by my straightforward No, to your tempting proposal, my whole probable character, and you will be able to trust your interests, and those of your family, by whom I have been so kindly treated, to my own sense of honour and humanity — and (I will add, though I *do* object to succeed the Don) also to my sense of the provocation

you have received to engage in your present trade, and my little sympathy with part of the system you war against."

"Then we have done talking," said the smuggler, suddenly laying his hand on mine; "I will *not* doubt you, Mr. Mutford. And now it is time, and more than time, that you and your friend were out of my house, you know for what reasons—and on your way to your own homes, sir. So—master-mate!" he called to the other end of the secret apartment, but called only in a peculiarly hard whisper—"Master-mate! Farmer Bob, I say!"

Something huge stirred on the bed at that extreme of the attic, and presently a man moved lazily off it, and came towards us. As he advanced, I saw an individual of about thirty, and of great height, naturally, poking his head forward, and a little from side to side, and bending his body from the hips; he was fleshy, very fleshy, though not exactly fat; rather in-kneed; and the poking head was covered with short, silky hair, almost white, and he had large eye-brows, and long eye-lashes, of the same colour, and his face seemed made of white wax, without a tint of red in the cheeks, and very little in his pendant under lip. I must add, that if my host's face and features seemed exaggerated, his excelled them, and yet he appeared neither stupid nor unapprehensive; on the contrary, there was a kind of shrewdness in his weak, winking, pale, and ever-smiling eyes, and also in his superabundance of ever-smiling lip.

"My brother, sir,—Master-mate, or Farmer Bob, according to occasion—my third and youngest brother; a little sleepy, after two nights loss of rest, as you see."

"But now, at last," I replied, gazing wistfully at the head and face which nodded and smiled to me—"surely now, at last, I behold——"

"No, Mr. Mutford," said Linnock, smiling too, "your first impression, taken from *my* face, was the correct one; 't is me, sir, they call"— here he passed his hand over his ebon chin—"'t is me they call Lilly White, at your service."

I could not help laughing, nor did the very dissimilar others refuse to join me.

"But we must be doing, sir," resumed my Lilly:—"Bob, look out till you see Mr. Mutford and the Lieutenant well off the premises, and then you know where to find Martha, to give her a word. Come, Mr. Mutford."

We descended to the door which communicated with the treacherous flower-bed in the garden; in a few moments I stood in the open air.

"Now, sir, join the merry folks in the parlour, giving what account you can of your hour's absence; I will be with you and them as soon as possible." He took leave of me at the garden-door, and not exactly knowing what he meant to do, I walked across the yard into the house.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

* * * * *

Mr. Linnock had called the party in the parlour "merry folk," because the loud laughter of Miss Eliza reached us as we stood at the garden-door; and when I took my place at the supper-table, I found that your brother still contrived to keep up her spirits. He and she made some good-humoured conjectures as to the cause of my absence; the one accusing me of a sonnet to the moon, to which my defence was, that there was no moon that evening; the other supposing a tender melancholy for me; and I think she meant a glance at the mysterious Lady Ellen, which, however, I gravely discountenanced. Mrs. Linnock did not appear at supper, and Miss Linnock looked thoughtful and on the watch.

In about a quarter of an hour we heard the sound of wheels rolling in the yard. Miss Linnock jumped up, crying out, "Father!" and her sister more elegantly ejaculated "Papa! dear papa!" and both left the room in a joyous flurry, excellently well acted. Directly, I caught Mr. Linnock's voice, and that of his white-headed brother, loud in remonstrance, and surprise, and explanation; and with a — "Was ever the like heard of?" the two smugglers entered the parlour, followed by the young ladies and their mother. I kept my countenance very well during my presentation to Mr. Linnock and Farmer Bob. Then followed our host's indignant tirade against the impudent dogs who had dared to commit an outrage upon gentlemen like us, and to use his house for their purposes; and his regret that we should have been so treated, and his honest hopes, however, that under the circumstances we had felt ourselves as comfortable as was possible; and his regrets again that he had been absent

from home so long, and not on the spot when the smuggling rascals had deprived us of our liberty; for they could not have humbugged him with a silly tale, as they had done in the case of other persons (and here he looked reprehensively at his wife and daughters, who, bless them! were the very models of innocent consternation,) — no, nor bullied him neither; and he wondered to death, almost, how some people could be so easily imposed upon — and now that he and his brother *were* at home, at last ——

"You will free us of those fellows, I hope?" interrupted Alexander. Mr. Linnock replied that he had done so already: the moment he saw them lurking about his gate, as he drove up to it with his brother in the one-horse chaise, he had asked their business, and not getting an answer that pleased him, called out his helpers from the stable and the cow-shed, and soon sent the scamps a packing ——

"Then, in fact, we are free men?" again asked your brother. — Certainly. Free to go where we pleased, that moment; only he hoped that we would do him the pleasure of staying till morning at least, or, for that matter, as long as we liked, for he would be most happy ——

A third time Alexander interrupted him to demand the favour of a horse and guide to his tower. I also requested similar accommodation. The whole family now besieged us with hospitable entreaties. We were immovable; and eventually, and in less than ten minutes after Mr. Linnock's return from London, we had mounted our borrowed horses, and begun to follow our guide, to the full satisfaction of those we parted from, notwithstanding their kind speeches. I venture to affirm that it was not long after our disappearance, by a convenient road, until the "good 'uns," already run in by the Miss Molly, were safely stowed away in places I knew something about.

At the edge of the fosse of his tower, I delivered your brother to his men, and understood from their words to him, that after searching and making enquiries in all directions, aided by fellow-officers along the coast, as well as by the

civil authorities, they had entertained the most serious alarm for his safety.

Proceeding homeward, I found my father and Bessy in about the same state of uneasiness on my own account, notwithstanding that they had received a vague note, dated from no place, and free of all explanation, which I trusted to the diplomatist of the smugglers for delivery to them, upon the first night of my loss of liberty: — the fellow would not engage to deliver one of a more satisfactory character, and bargained to get even that unsealed.

It was late, as you will suppose, when I arrived at home — past eleven o'clock. Yet my father and sister would sit up to hear a full account of my adventures. And I regretted this, for neither of them looked as well or as happy, or as spirited as they had done the last time I had seen them; — but this is fresh ground, dear Richard, and I had better send you off the close of my smuggling story just as it is; so good-by.

The journal again, Graves, after a heavy-hearted pause of some days, and I am only going to write what (as has happened before) must be laid by for you against a future day; ay, indeed; perhaps some such explanations as my suppressed scraps will supply, may be useful, yet.

I did not go to rest the first night after my escape from Lilly White's with a tranquil spirit. My father and I were alone together for a few minutes, and he told me something to make me quarrel with my pillow. The Honourable George Allen had repeatedly appeared lounging about our house during my absence, and my father saw him once in our little back garden; and he absolutely knocked at our door that very morning, to enquire after Miss Mutford's health — insolent cur! — but no matter. My father feared that he might have fallen in with Bessy on her walks, and she has been prohibited from going out alone in future.

I bridled my rage — although it, and a stinging sense of shame, sent the blood to my cheeks — and asked my father how Bessy seemed to have taken his prohibition. He

could not exactly say. He feared to harbour one disagreeable thought of his poor Bessy (and here the tears fell from the old man's eyes)—yet he thought, or he suspected she had appeared to be embarrassed, and conscious, and perhaps a little sullen; but he might have been wrong—he was sure he was wrong. Had he ventured any indirect questions with her? No—not a breath. He would not lead her to think he doubted her, for worlds; and he commanded me to follow the same course. I promised nothing, for I could not bring myself to resolve upon implicit obedience. Bessy re-entered the room, and the subject ceased.

I talked of indifferent things, and kept my eye upon her: and whether by the contrivance of suspicion, which, quite as industriously as jealousy, bakes its own cake (excuse the homely version of the Shakspearian adage)—or that there really were and are grounds for my conclusions, I did believe, Graves, that something new had entered into the spirit and the nature of my sister. An absorbing, agitating, selfish something, ay, and a something that she keeps from us, and is to keep from us—Great God! save me from my own horrid fears!—poverty and shame together—oh! that would be horrid, indeed!

So, little wonder that I had not a very good night's rest, Graves. But this was not the full cause of my vigils. Bessy retired to bed. I asked my father for—three pounds—for what purpose you shall hear. I had calculated how long it was since Lucy Peat entered into our service; ascertained that we now owed her this sum, and I asked it, in order to pay her, the next morning, and send her out of the house. For my own part, there was not a shilling in my pocket.

Well. My father assured me that he could not spare me *one* pound. That very morning he too had been making his calculations; and found that we had scarce enough money in the house *to buy food* for the days that must elapse till he would be entitled to draw the quarterly interest of the little sum (and yet, our only earthly fortune,) placed in the hands of a London banker. I believe I was going to hint at the great necessity of the case for which I

wanted the money, although it must have terribly shocked him; when he added, that he could not even pay his rent till the time mentioned: no, nor our servant-maid's wages; and, in fact, she had asked him to settle with her a few hours before I came home, and he was compelled to refuse her.

And thus, Graves, *I* am compelled to tolerate, under the same roof with my sister, a girl of tainted heart and mind, and one with whom Bessy has been on terms of too great confidence, I fear, and who has the ear of the Honourable George Allen, to my own certain knowledge. But it can't be helped; and I have only to hold myself vigilant; and vigilant I am, though I tremble in my office, dear Graves — ay, tremble.

The morning after this night, I got Bessy into a conversation about our memorable (accursed!) visit to Lord Lintern's. I reminded her, gaily, of her pity for the elder son, and her admiration of the personal graces, ay, and the manners too, of the younger. Her head was down, but I saw her colour come and go.

"Has he never blessed your bright eyes since?" I continued.

"Why — yes —" she stammered, "has he not often rode or walked by the windows?"

"Have you seen him on any of *your* walks, Bessy?" I changed my tone a little.

"Me? — him?" she was confused, by heavens! "him, Michael? never! how could you think it? never, never, indeed! on my word, Michael, on my honour, on my soul!" and she clasped her hands, and looked up at me, trembling, weeping, and terrified. Hark you, Graves — and whenever you can read this, pity me —

By my mother's soul, I did not believe her!

Next day, she and I had a few words more together; I told her what I had learned of the character of Lucy Peat, and was going on to warn her against all unnecessary intercourse with the girl, when she interrupted me, with

staring eyes, and pale cheeks, crying, "Is that possible! oh, dear me, is that possible!" (here is one of Bessy's childish phrases for you, for, indeed, in experience, — except it has very lately come to her, — in turn of mind, and almost in years, scarce sixteen, she *is* a child; and would to Heaven she were so in person!) — "Oh, Michael," she continued, "I wish you had known that sooner; oh, I wish *I* had known it sooner!"

And again, Graves, I arrived at a conclusion. She *had* made a confidant of Lucy Peat, or the wily girl had induced her into confidence (doubtless for a good bribe); and acting on this thought, perhaps too hastily — I resumed —

"Bessy, my love, you are frightened at my news."

"I am indeed, dear Michael!"

"Because, Bessy —" I took her hand — "now do not suppose I blame you much — because you have allowed Lucy to make free with you."

She wept and was silent; I went on.

"Because she has brought you messages, Bessy."

"Oh, yes, yes; I own it! but I never replied to them, Michael, not a single time; and I have bid her not to bring me any more, indeed I have; and it was wrong of me, very wrong, not to say all this before; but I feared to shock our dearest father, Michael, — that was the only reason, believe me it was; and oh, Michael, do not tell him now! Pray do not, it would kill him, and me with him! Oh, mercies and goodness, what shall I, shall I do!"

She left the room suddenly.

Again, Graves, again, my only friend, I did not believe her!

Look at the thing in the face as I do. See all this fright and anguish, disproportioned to the occasion: disproportioned to it, *if* she has at last been candid with me; *if* she hides nothing; *if* she has not answered his messages; *if* she has not met him! met him, often out of doors! under the eye of the world! And met *him!* that unfledged impertinence! that stolid sapling of aristocracy! he who dared to glare upon her innocent cheek — then, at

least, innocent — till he kindled it into burning blushes, and wetted it with virgin tears — and in my presence — and she at my side — but as if I were not there — were not her protector — her brother — with better blood than his in my viens — and with a heart to — yes, Graves, to strike him dead, if he has given me cause, good and sufficient! We shall see.

Your brother and I see each other often. (I resume after a pause.) And I think he begins to acquire more knowledge of the service he is upon; ay, and suspect a little of the scene of our late adventures together, and of my candour, into the bargain. But he has said nothing openly or directly, nor, I believe, will he. A sense of fit and unfit must doubtless form my excuse, in his eyes, and keep him silent.

"Harold," Graves: — Harold that was to be so soon, so very soon put into rehearsal — I have not heard a word about him since. But I suppose it will all come right, some day. Meantime I work with tolerable industry at small things, and send them to the periodicals: though, to tell the blessed truth, no one takes notice of them, either. Well; I can only work and wait.

And from working and waiting, a little trump seems to turn up at last, sure enough. This morning I have another letter from the manager, assuring me that next Thursday week we are to have "Harold" in a first rehearsal; and I am to attend. It was not his fault, he says, that the matter has been delayed; but in fact he cannot control other people; and although the two great tragedians seemed highly pleased with their parts at first, and engaged to play them, they have since appeared a little shy of each other occasionally, and could not be got to attend a rehearsal together: now, however, they are in better humour, as, indeed, they ought to be; "for," adds my managed manager, "you have balanced the power of the two men to a hair, sir, each in his own different way, so as really to leave no cause of jealousy." The zany! I

never thought of one or the other of his stars while writing my poor play ; but I suppose I had better not say so, as it seems taken for granted that I was in duty bound to have done so.

And I got another letter along with the manager's, Graves. It comes from the editor of an obscure Magazine, to whom (as I *would* try every body) I sent "an article" about two months ago ; and (incredible news !) he *has* printed me, and actually enclosed three pounds, fifteen shillings and sixpence, for a matter some seventeen pages in length. And now, at last, pay Lucy Peat, and send her off. No, Graves — I must first pay her lover, Sam Geeson, in whose debt I am for a few bottles of smuggled French wine for my poor, drooping father (he thinks it was in the house), — and for sundry poached hares, rabbits, and pheasants ! also craved by my father's weak state ; (he will not allow himself even butcher's meat, at his own cost, and I lie to him solemnly that people of my acquaintance send us presents !) and if I had gone in debt for these things with a regular trader, they would cost me three times as much as I pay the young smuggler — and how could I discharge such a debt as that ? And, by heavens ! my father shall not want food, good and fit for him, while only a rich man's preserve is to be trenched on, or the King baffled of his wine-duty !

Ha, Graves ! will you know something of me as you read this ? — let me add, that I have been compelled to suffer Sam Geeson to sit at the kitchen fire with Lucy Peat, because I could not pay him for his good things, nor pay Lucy her wages — Oh, Poverty ! thou *art* vice !

Your brother is laughing heartily in the next room, as I write, amusing Bessy and my father ; and I am to go with him and her to see and to enjoy the humours of the village fair to-morrow.

Two days after the fair ——

And what an unjoyous, solid, rude, suffocating, deafening, headach-giving thing a fair in the country *is!* — (let

me just except Greenwich fair, if Greenwich *be* in the country — or rather the accidental adjunct of the noble old park, and the freaks it irresistibly inspires.) The streets of the little village stuffed with people who will walk over you if you do not push them about as they do you; girls scrambling on by themselves, and men and lads by themselves; and no one laughing, nor yet smiling, but on the contrary the greater number either half-scowling at one another, or else looking nervously shy of having it appear that they are such fools as to allow themselves to be pleased. Peep into one of the inns, of which all the lower rooms are flung open to genteelish company, among the rows of happy creatures sitting on forms by the walls, drinking porter, or ale, or brandy and hot water, and nearly all look discontented still; — peep into a dancing booth, as you pass by, and you will see perhaps a dozen girls exerting themselves to the utmost in a work-and-labour way, for the edification of three or four bumpkins, who walk from side to side among them with very disdainful faces, and now and then lift up their legs, and let them down again, one after another, as if they were plodding over a stubble field, or at best turning the tread-mill at slow time. And how I abhor that smock-frock into the bargain! the most unpicturesque, unmanly, unlovely, sheep-faced piece of costume in the world. Ay, and the close-laced bumpkin buskins, too, which, from constant pressure, impoverish the most considerable muscles of the leg, and leave an English peasant the worst-limbed peasant I have yet seen.

And such are the general features of a village fair almost always presented to my eye; for I have nothing to do with the itinerant booth-shops of trinkets, knick-knacks, and gingerbread, nor with the wild-beast shows, nor the equestrians, nor the pig-faced lady, inasmuch as they have nothing to do with the local characteristics of the company whom they delight; — or, at most, I shall allude to them only to say that the thumping of the big drums, and the harsh and rude clashing of the cymbals, and the screaming, or shrieking, or groaning of other instruments of noise (of music, indeed!) — kept up on the platforms before each, stun my brain nearly to desperation.

But what has become of the power, or the will, or the zest for natural and innocent enjoyment of the villagers of Old England?—merry Old England it used to be, we are told:—can I call it so at present?—Why don't these hard-worked, simple-minded poor fellows, take delight in the few holidays left open to them?—for, as to Sunday, it has now become, to all outward appearance, the saddest day out of the seven. And, stop:—perhaps it is this very pharisaical observance of the Sabbath, at first imposed upon them against their natures and wishes, and since grown into a sullen, sulky habit, which at length incapacitates them from relishing even their annual play-days. At all events, Graves, you know my notions of old, as to the good sense, good feeling, nay, good religion, of making it criminal in a poor man or lad to sing a harmless song, play at quoits or cricket, or be seen dancing with his sweetheart, or—if he and she like—his arm round her neck of a Sunday. None of those acts would be in themselves unholy, and therefore would not break the command for keeping holy the Sabbath. Farther—I do sincerely believe that after due worship of God, or in the intervals of the different times set apart for His worship, on His own day, a joyous and a contented heart giving vent, according to the common manifestations of human nature, to its joy and to its content, would not be odious in the sight of Him who loves his creatures with a surpassing love, and who has contrived a wondrous plan for even their earthly happiness. "There is joy in heaven," where reigns an eternal Sabbath;—and I *will* insist, that it was upon the first earthly Sabbath-day, after the "foundations of the earth were laid," and "the corner stone thereof," that "the morning stars praised Him together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy!"

As to the good feeling and good sense of compelling poor Johnny-raw to be *triste* and demure-looking upon the only day of the week that he is not bent double with labour, follow him for a good part of a Sunday, and draw your own conclusions. See him first, after church or chapel service, moping alone, or with a group of his own sex, at one side of the village street, or of a green field, while flocks of pretty and (if they durst) merry-hearted girls move in a

somewhat more active manner, at the other side; see him thus, and you pity his lot (pray do not fall into the mistake of always quarrelling with him for stupidity).—When he tires of his unenlivening lounge, stand near the Tap, and you will catch a glimpse of him, however, slipping into its ever-open or only-latched door, round a corner; and you do not greatly pity him now,—but how much *can* you blame him? What are his means of enjoyment in the open air? And, if he had some means of enjoyment in the open air, would he be in the Tap—in it, at least, so often, or so long, at a time? And (take human nature as it is, as it has ever been, and as it ever must be,)—which is the greater breach of the Sabbath, dancing happily on the green sod, ay, and with one of those nice village beauties before him, or spending his money on the heavy, stupifying national drink of England? (Graves, have not the porter and the ale of England, the light wines or the light beer of France, and the whisky of Ireland, a point of impression upon the very different characters of the three people?) And can his methodised avoidance of the cheery companionship of the other sex, openly, and in the face of heaven and of man, upon a Sabbath day—to say nothing of his self-control in different matters—be much better, very often, than a system of demoralising hypocrisy? Ask the parish overseer, and he may perhaps tell you that more seeds of care and trouble to him are sown of a Sunday evening (at all events of a Sunday night, take the seasons through,) than upon any other evening of the week. And does he, or do you expect it otherwise? I think, in my conscience, it is evident that the natural gallantry common to all men, gentle and simple, might, in seven cases out of ten, be diverted from concentrating itself into a downright breach of parish law, if it were allowed to evaporate, gradually, in the hundred harmless little courtesies which are matters of course amongst men and women, lads and girls, in less disciplined communities. This, however, you will say, is rather a stretching of my theory,—very well. Give me back our fine merry Old England national character among the lower orders, ay, and some of the middle too, and that is what I want, and you may effect it as you like,

and as you can. Make our smock-frocked compatriots look less unhappy, less jealous of a free-hearted, natural existence, less sulky while a charming girl of the same street and parish stops him, as he plods along, and almost by force detains him a few moments while she tries her very best to tell him pleasant stories and anecdotes, and to look up, laughing, into his face,—in fact (inverted man that he is to suffer it!)—to court him. Let me finish my wandering chapter with a really serious sentence or two. Make your villagers enjoy their lives as their forefathers did theirs, or, at least, make them more moral than their forefathers were, as a set-off against their sad and sour pretensions to outward decorum. Convince them that—one thing with another—they have more facilities for happiness than the people of any second country under the sun, and yet that—not in seeming, merely, but in downright fact, and in their hearts, and livers, brains, spleens, and gall-bladders,—they are the least joyous people under that same sun.

But, how am I employing my pen? You would scarce think, now, Graves, that connected with this fair-day are occurrences waiting to be written down to you, which positively keep me restless, and, very probably, may influence my earthly life to come!—matters linked together by no less persons than the Honourable George Allen, his father, Bessy, your brother, and, saying nothing of myself, the recluse of the smuggler's fortress? 'Tis the fact though; so listen.

You will not, however, till I inform you why, since my escape from Mr. Linnock to the present moment, I have never before mentioned the name of that mysterious young lady: why I have not exerted myself to "find her out,' as I so positively promised, though perhaps I *have*, and only kept the facts from you? No. And why not, then, a second time? I don't know. My interest in her did not cease, certainly; nay, I fear it continued absurdly strong: but what could she *be* to me, I asked myself? and the question arose the oftener that I had found other persons and things to occupy me at home; or perhaps I only postponed; or did the doubt of her sanity make me waver? And might not Mr. Linnock's high-mouthed words about some joint

interests between her and me, and that other still more vague identity, "The Don," have been only pure invention, to irk me to strike his bargain with him? This I asked myself also. However, do not rely on any thing I say upon the subject. I was incongruous, as usual; and that's enough.

Bessy, your brother, and I went to the fair, as I told you was to be the case. During the short walk from our little village to the houses at the sea-side, where some of the sights and amusements of the day were to be had, we passed by a cricket-field.

By the way, I am horribly of the Duchesse de Berri's mind on one point, and that *is* cricket; don't you remember that, at Dieppe, the other day, the English gentlemen visiters of the place paid her the honour of inviting her to witness their national game; and that she came to the ground, and sat in a beautiful pavilion; and that, directly, the play began; and that she took no notice, but kept talking and laughing with her French attendants and eating sweet things; and that our countrymen marvelled thereat, and exerted themselves more and more to fix her attention, but all in vain; and that at last, however, she was seen to look grave and observant, and turn her eyes to the cricketers, upon which, much flattered, they worked so hard as to outdo, in energy and vivacity, all former cricketers; and that the Duchesse began to grow fidgety and seem impatient thereupon, and despatched one of the gentlemen of her suite with some message to our fellow-countrymen; and that our fellow-countrymen thought they were going to hear a request, arising out of womanly nervousness and amiability, praying them not to exert themselves so very much, lest some of them might cause injury to the spine; and that, notwithstanding, when the message was delivered, it only contained her royal highness's wish to know how soon the English gentlemen proposed to give over their preliminary arrangements, and begin their game; and that, when they allowed her to understand they *had* been playing their game all the while, the Duchesse de Berri left the ground forthwith?

But Bessy, your brother and I had to pass the more popular cricket-ground here. Crowds of people stood at the white palings of the field, by which ran the raised footway of the road we were going; and inside the palings were finer folk, all delighted with the noble game, and all as grave, and as silent, and as proper, as if they had stopped there a moment to let a funeral go by. We stopped too, to gain our passing share of delight. I observed in the field two fine young women, with a fashionable, but showy air, and with noses so long and of such an outline, as to set some vague recollections and associations at work in my mind. They were walking towards us, and nodding to some one on the road. I turned my head, and saw the Honourable George Allen behind us, on horseback, so placed as to plant his eyes on Bessy's side-face. That instant his sister, — now I had the family noses by heart — came close to the palings, a few steps from where we stood, and one of them called him. He turned his horse's head over the paling, allowed his fore-feet to rest on the path, and began to converse with them. In this position he was between us and the sea-side houses; so that to pursue our walk, we must either have waited for him to leave the footpath free, or else have descended from it, and walked round his horse upon the road. I was not inclined to do this; first, because the young gentleman committed a breach of turnpike law to our inconvenience; secondly, because he committed a breach of ordinary good manners, which it would have been unfriendly towards him not to notice; thirdly, because one of our party was a lady, who could not well be required to scramble her way among the line of stationary carriages on the road merely for his gratification: and think you, Graves, I had no other argument? Think you the renewed insolence of his stare at my sister in my presence, to say nothing of your brother, touched me not a little? Think you I did not keenly feel the exquisite insult offered to her by his peculiar atttentions, — so peculiar, observe, as to permit her to be inconvenienced by his horse, at the moment that they pointed her out to the notice of the vulgar crowd, well-dressed and all, around

us? And was I once more nothing, at my poor sister's side? — Let us see, I said.

My only difficulty was about *his* sisters, and I thought I would wait one moment for their sakes. But after I had waited two, and that our way was still obstructed, and that we had been compelled to stand back from the fidgety hind legs of his high-blooded steed, it struck me that I ought at least to say a word in remonstrance; and so, I requested him, in an amiable manner, to have the goodness to allow us to pass on. He turned his head, as I spoke, but it was not to reply to me, nor to look at me, nor to do what I had asked, but to stare again at Bessy. His brilliant, long-nosed sisters also honoured her with a look, but did not ask their brother to oblige her and her friends. After this, I could not afford to lose another moment, even for them; and, anticipating Alexander, I believe, in something less courteous, I took off my hat to them, begging pardon; caught the horse by the bridle, backed him upon the road, and held him there till Bessy and your brother had walked by.

Did the Honourable George Allen try to disengage his horse's head from my hand? No such thing. While I was in the act of moving him about in his saddle at my pleasure, he resumed the heavy, stupid conversation with his sisters which my request had interrupted, not even raising his cold-toned voice to make up for the distance he had been forced from them, and I pursued my way after Alexander and his charge unquestioned, and — *that*, of course, was *his* triumph — unnoticed. But, for my own part, I can see little of a gentlemanly or a manly triumph in it. 'Tis the new way, I know, among some of our rising and just risen youth, to be as callous to the penalty inflicted on them for ill manners, as they are to that old-fashioned sense of good manners, which hindered their fathers from putting on their rank only as plate-armour to protect vulgarity. "Did he learn all that at Oxford?" demanded Alexander, when I had joined him; "we could have done him as much good on quarter-deck."

But we had not yet bid adieu to the Honourable nor to his characteristics.

A carriage overtook and passed us ere we reached the sea-houses; I saw his sisters, and a cross-looking old gentleman in it, and he trotted after it. We arrived at a show of wild beasts, and went in to stare at them. The place was crowded, and almost the first party we met were the young Ladies Allen, their brother, and their old friend. We were obliged to stand still behind them, while they contemplated the (to me, affecting, though I don't perhaps clearly know why, or won't stop to explain,)—curiosity of a fine lion and a little Italian greyhound at play together. Bessy was much pleased with the sight, and, not recognising our tormentors as soon as I did, smilingly whispered a hope that they would soon pass to another cage, and let us look our fill. I do not know if the Honourable George Allen heard her little voice; he turned round, however, while she spoke, and recommenced his system of annoyance; still consistent in not considering himself called on to show my sister any of the politeness due to an equal, at the moment that he flattered her with personal admiration; for, though he must have well understood (even if he had not caught her words) that he towered up between her and the sight she had stopped still to enjoy, he would not move a jot. Nay, whenever he did not turn his head to glare at her, he squared his shoulders and elbows to take up as much room as possible; and I even caught him objecting to a proposal of his sisters to change their subject of natural history.

I own my blood began to tingle; but, keeping a calm face, I only led Bessy by the side of him and his red-visaged, crusty-looking old companion, and stood with her directly before them. The Ladies Allen were left unincommoded by my movement; but they thought fit, however, to seem intruded upon, and they were moving away, when the old gentleman grumbled, and their brother said in Bessy's ear, "Oh, go in to him at once, my dear."

"Aha!" cried I to myself, "now, infidel, I have thee on the hip!"

Alexander did not overhear this gross as well as impertinent speech. When he observed Bessy's tears, I said she was only frightened at the tiger in the next cage. It was

easy, however, to whisper to your brother, while the animals afterwards riveted her attention, what I wished him to know; and our measures were soon adjusted and as soon entered upon. He left me on the pretence of going to speak to a friend in the crowd.

I perceived that the Allens were leaving the exhibition, and that he followed them closely. In a few minutes he was at my side, and said, still in a whisper, "Not as great a scamp as we thought: as soon as I gave him our cards, he said he would return and apologise directly; but that he had to see his own sisters to their carriage, and he would call at my tower and do what we ask within an hour."

We went home, and, there leaving Bessy, repaired to the tower, to be ready for the young Honourable. We waited the hour; he did not appear. Another and another, with like success. I shared Alexander's mutton and bottle; we were still left to wait. The affair had occurred at three o'clock in the day; it was now eight in the evening; and I asked your brother if our young friend could have quite missed in his reading the improving story of Mahomet and the Mountain? He thought it likely, but saw no reason why he might not have the practical benefit of it, notwithstanding. We walked down to the village, found Master Fox disengaged, though hallooing for customers, standing up on the driving-seat of his fly, and in a short time afterwards Polly and Harrit halted us before the mansion of Lord Lintern.

As, in truth, the staid face of the Honourable George Allen proposed a question—like Mas'r Fox's own, though not to such an extent—as to his precise age,—that is, it might be seventeen or two or three and twenty, just as his parish register should happen to decide,—we had been slightly discussing the probability of how far he was an accountable person in such matters, while on our way to his father's house. It struck me that our intelligent charioteer had before now mentioned to me his having been at college. I questioned Master Fox upon the fact, and if he was to be depended upon, our doubts were removed; for he not only admitted indeed having supplied me pre-

viously with the information, but now insisted on its correctness.

Thus armed (though to own the truth not thus alone, for with a view to the possibility of a quick settling of our business in one way or the other, Alexander allowed me to take well-disguised a certain mahogany case of his in my hand as we left the tower,) he entered the house, leaving me and the half-suspicious and therefore unusually grave Mas'r Fox to await his return. To my surprise he stayed an unnecessarily long time from us; and when he did come back, looking pale with curbed indignation, what he had to report to me raised my wonder indeed.

He had been ushered into a room, upon asking to see the Honourable scion, where was seated a gentleman with spectacles, who, as it afterwards obviously appeared, had been expecting him, and who announced himself as the friend of the delinquent. Alexander stated his business briefly, not omitting to mention the inconvenience we had been put to in coming to look for our apology, after it had been promised to be delivered to us some miles off, and some hours ago.

The spectacled gentleman, assuming very sensible airs, made most light of the whole matter; supposed that his young friend, however, had not meant to give offence, and that much he might say for him; but, indeed, as to any thing else,—"Pray, sir," interrupting his own statement, and taking up my card which lay on the table before him, "and who is Mr. Mutford? and what kind of an address is this?"

Your brother gave the fit answer.

"Oh,—um; and may I ask again, sir, if Mr. Mutford or his father——"

(I withhold the rest of his question for a moment, Graves, to beg of you to note it well; to note it as a question proposd under the circumstances, by one holding the rank of an English country gentleman, and in this view it is valuable for more than its application to me; and also to note it in the sense *of* its application to me; of a thing to be reported to me — to *me*, Graves! — after my life, and with the effects of that life upon me! — and now hearken.)

"May I ask again, sir, if Mr. Mutford or his father—*has any property in the county?*"

You need not be told that Alexander now pressed for a direct and immediate adjustment of his business. He was as far as ever from that, however. He had heard all that could be said.

"And had he now his full answer from the principal party?"

"Oh, — um, — certainly; Mr. Mutford might assure himself, indeed, that the thing could go no farther; and he ought to recollect that it was into a magistrate's house he sent his friend on such an errand; and he, the speaker, was himself a magistrate; and, in fact, proper care would be taken in the matter; and ——"

Your brother was about to speak, when the door opened, and the jolly-coloured, though not jolly-featured face of the old gentleman who had been with the Allens in the menagerie appeared at it, and its wearer forthwith strode into the room, working himself, — with the help of wine, no doubt, — into a curious kind of a passion, even beforehand. He repeated all that the man of the lens had said, and more; he insisted that the Honourable George Allen had said or done nothing but what was praiseworthy; that we ought to have kept our places in the presence of the wild beasts and of his party; that it was not endurable that ladies and gentlemen ——

Here he found himself arrested by Alexander, who prepared to withdraw from any more superfluous discussion with, evidently, two frequenters of Lord Lintern's hospitable table. "I have my answer," he said to Sir Spectacles, "and my friend and I know how to act upon it."

At this both toadies spoke together, again insinuating magisterial threats, while they still would make inexpressibly light of our claims to a hearing of any kind.

"Oh, as to that, you know," laughed Alexander, "there are two counties in England."

The law should be respected in every county in England! and *that* we would find.

"Then, as I've heard, there's very nice sailing, although

in a steamer, every day, to the French side of the Channel," he continued.

The gentlemen seemed struck, and interchanged glances in silence for a moment; then the old fellow faced round to Alexander, and asked, deliberately — "Pray, sir, are you an Irishman?"

But it was getting too absurd, and your brother again moved to the door, with a threat in his turn, not much to the advantage of the genius for keeping his word, or for keeping his courage up, of the Honourable George. There they met him with something that made him stop a moment longer. Their young friend, in fact and in truth, must be shielded from inconvenience; — for he was no more than a boy; quite a boy.

Alexander asked if he knew of the intention of representing him in this light? He was told he might take the matter as he wished: "We are his friends, sir."

"And meet me here with his permission?"

"Certainly."

"Then, good night, indeed, gentlemen;" and Alexander hastened to join me.

It had occurred to him in the house to demand to see the father, in the son's place, the moment that the gallant youth withdrew from the discussion, upon the plea of non-responsibility. An apprehension of not being quite cool enough for a new interview made your brother change his mind. Now we sat in the open fly, before the house, for some time, balancing the best course to take, while Mas'r Fox, at last fully aware of his awful predicament, looked silently and bodingly from one to another of us.

It was our joint opinion that, as yet, Lord Lintern had been kept ignorant of the whole occurrences, by the management of the two family friends. Alexander had met him slightly, and so had I, and neither of us believed, whatever might be his other sins, that it was he who had transmitted the white feather to his son's cap: hence we could not believe either, that he had assented to the measures taken under his roof, to meet our demands for an explanation; and hence, again, we assured ourselves he had not heard of those measures. Should we enlighten him by re-

entering the house — or should we go home, and write a letter that we would compel to keep its temper?

Home. But first a confirmation, or the contrary, of Mas'r Fox's university intelligence. It was cheaply had. Alexander ascertained by a single enquiry at the door of a friend's house, on our road, that indeed the Honourable George Allen had been upwards of a year at Oxford. It next struck us, as a point of mere curiosity worth gratifying, to examine his parish register; and Mas'r Fox looked quite posed at being commanded to turn back a little way to the house of the "tithe parson," whom he had sketched to me on a former occasion. And when we sent in a request, at ten o'clock at night, to the good Dr. Bailey, for permission to look over the parish books, on urgent business, doubtless his surprise equalled at least that of his little rebellious black sheep. He did not, however, gainsay our demand, and we were quickly made sure that our unaccountable boy had, as Alexander observed, attained the age at which the Irish admirer of Miss Tilney Long had fought his conquering way to her hand and magnificent fortune.

And — "well," continued your brother, "I *am* puzzled."

"*Is* it what you said — the white feather?" I asked.

"Whatever it is, I hope there is not much more of it among us. I don't want to revive, in its absurd excess, the practice which was deservedly getting out of fashion, even when Fletcher wrote his Little French Lawyer to ridicule it; I don't want in England the gouging or the blunderbusses in a saw-pit of Jonathan's land, nor the hedge-firing of Paddy's land, nor the sensitive point of honour of Monsieur's land; but I do want such a young blockhead as this to be more of a gentleman — a man (notwithstanding his registered plea) — either in precautions against rudeness and vulgarity, or else in spirit to meet their consequences."

"Or," I ventured to remark, "if it must become partially the rule among our young people of rank, never to explain away an offence against men or women, don't you think they ought always to stay at home?"

"Certainly; — even within the limits of the county

where their properties severally lie," he answered, laughing. "But come — here's the tower in view: — tarry, amiable Fox, for a letter:" we dismounted to walk up to the tower from the shingles. — "And let us see," continued Alexander to me, "if these were the notions of the boy's father forty years ago."

Do not distress yourself with a doubt that Alexander failed in making out a very pleasing little history of the late transactions, beginning at the cage of the lion and Italian greyhound, and ending at the plea of boyhood; to which I added two lines only, as a separate note, assuring myself beforehand of the great willingness of Lord Lintern to grant me the slight indulgence his son had denied us; and both being faithfully copied, Mas'r Fox was summoned, and despatched with them at the seasonable hour of half-past eleven o'clock at night.

No answer reached us next day; and now, in sad misgivings that the Honourable George was the true son of his father, I was under the necessity of sending to Lord Lintern, through the village post-office, (not, however, till the last moment at which it remained open,) my opinion of *his* seeming lack of punctuality; and I do not mean to flatter myself, when I aver that the language of reasonable indignation and downright insult had scarce ever before flowed so smoothly as it did over the polished page of essenced paper used on that occasion. It must have done good to any man's sense of decorum and politeness, to have been outraged in so beautiful a manner.

Well. This *did* produce something at last; and something more than I had reckoned on; or rather something different from it. First, however, I ought to mention another thing which it did not produce,—namely, an apology from the boy, delivered to me at my father's residence, by the village postman, early upon the morning after my last note to his father, and obviously written by him, at Lord Lintern's instance, before the latter could have received that note: and — observe, again, Graves, the address on the back of the penitent effusion was—"Mr. Michael Mutford" —*who* (I add the meaning of the new insult) *had no property in the county*. So I enclosed back the apology to

his Lordship, recognising it as the late result of your brother's first statement, and my first billet; expressing myself content with it, in this view; and agreeing to accept it, provided the juvenile writer were instructed to alter the address. But I had not time to seal my letter, when a servant of his Lordship galloped up to our house with yet another explanation, and, indeed, an ample one, from Lord Lintern himself — the product of my agreeable communication by the post the night before; and this I had hardly perused, when a lady also galloped to our door, followed by a second servant, and in a few seconds sent me up a summons to attend her in the little parlour. I descended, somewhat bewildered, and saw before me, greatly agitated, the recluse of Lilly White's fastness.

"Mr. Mutford," she began, "you *must* be satisfied with us—I have come here, unknown to any of my family, to say so, having just heard of your last letter by chance — and indeed it supplied my first information on the whole unhappy affair — but you must — that is, you *will*, sir, give my father credit for good intentions — ay, and prompt ones, too, in your regard; so far, at least, as this matter goes — I assure you that he insisted on a written explanation to you from my brother George, the moment after he received your friend's communication, and your accompanying note."

"Your brother George, madam?" I asked.

"Yes, yes, you know who I am, *now*—Lord Lintern's youngest daughter — but oh, Mr. Mutford, do not for that reason deny me the right of a peacemaker, on the present occasion, at least, if on no other—reflect, sir; do, sir, for Heaven's sake, upon the wretched — the horrible consequences of an open quarrel with any one of *us* — above all with my father! — dear Mr. Mutford, you *will* tell me that his last note has appeased you!"

It is curious to say that, one of the most distinct conclusions to which I came during this address, was that the lady's nose did not resemble in length or outline those of her brother George, and of her elder sisters whom I had seen in the cricket-field. And the second thing that fixed my interest, strengthened doubtless by association, was my being prohibited so expressly from quarrelling with her

family above all people in the world. Before she had done speaking, several other matters connected with her, though disconnected with her present business in my father's house, re-occurred to me, and I took a sudden resolution to change the topic between us as soon as possible.

First, however, I assured her that I was perfectly satisfied with her father's note of explanation, even if her brother's had not contented me.

"Write him word, then, to that effect," she said; "do, Mr. Mutford, this moment! let me find no discussion continued on that subject, at least, upon my return home! — though, doubtless, I shall have to encounter enough displeasure on my own account — for this very visit to you, sir: perhaps I may again be sent into obscure retirement to atone for my new offence! But no matter — and that is not the business — and you will say, no doubt, that I make allusions which do not concern you, *though you need not be too sure of that, sir*" (more mystery, or more raving, Graves). — "Oh!" here she looked out at the window, as another horseman, whom I only indistinctly saw while he alighted and walked to the street-door — "my most excellent friend! I knew it was but necessary to give him the slightest and hastiest summons on any good purpose: — excuse me, Mr. Mutford," she opened the parlour door, flitted out, and returned with her friend: — "you will allow me to introduce to your acquaintance the Reverend Mr. Snow, sir."

I bowed to a gentleman, past the middle age, whom I had before seen walking or riding by the sea, and whom I had understood to be one of the regular season-visiters of this little watering-place. His passing appearance had always filled me with very agreeable feelings of interest; and now, as he returned my bow, and as his smiling eyes met mine, I felt towards him, if it was possible, so suddenly, a movement of the heart and soul, which I have since called love — reverential love. He was rather tall, but slight; erect, and in every step and motion a bland gentleman; his face — I must borrow the hackneyed, but ever beautiful illustration of Sterne — "it was one of those which Guido has often painted — mild, pale, penetrating;" but the poor

monk of the order of St. Francis may have had a conventual expression of piety, as indeed the rest of the sentence, which I have left untouched, seems to hint, and the peculiar charm of the countenance before me is its total freedom from any such thing, while still it beams with gentle holiness. How lamely does the pen attempt portrait-painting! I would try in vain, dear Graves, to give you any vivid notion of my subject. Pale, certainly — but of a beautiful paleness; paleness with blood in it; high, though not bald forehead; grey hair, slightly powdered, and worn very short; full eyebrows, straight for two thirds of their extent, and then falling at an angle upon the finely-shaped and placid temples; blue eyes, with long lashes, and deeply folding upper lid, and, when they decidedly smile, as they often do, almost closing in a concentrated glitter of benevolence; Roman nose; cheeks, all but wasted; a mouth of firmness and of power, but like the eyes, captivating; and a deep dimpled chin. This is all I can do — the best sketch my pen will make; and it is nought.

After Lady Ellen had introduced us, she continued to speak.

"But, Mr. Snow, I have the pleasure to tell you that we are little better than idle intruders here; Mr. Mutford required no counsel but his own heart, and its feelings of right, and its impulse to do good for evil."

"Oh, to be sure, my dear, to be sure," observed her friend; and in his tone, and in his features, while he spoke those few familiar words, there was unutterable persuasion to Christian gentleness: — "reflection, and a short dialogue with the heart, are always sufficient to correct the first impulses of an imperfectly compounded nature: we thank you, Mr. Mutford," — he took my hand, — "we thank you for recollecting what was due to the great law which we all obey, as well as to the peculiar relation in which you stand to this lady and her friends."

First, of this speech. I knew I was over-praised, but, without wishing to play the hypocrite, bowed to it. Secondly, my new acquaintance could not be raving too, and yet he seemed to echo certain allusions of Lady Ellen. I was determined upon an explanation, as the following plain speech shows.

"Pray inform me, sir, in what consists the peculiarity of the relation in which I stand to Lord Lintern and his family? Apart from the late discussion, and the most flattering, but, to me, incomprehensible interest of this lady in my regard, and my deep gratitude for it, what can I be to him or to them?"

They looked at each other, much surprised, but neither answered.

"I had not the honour of being aware of the existence of his Lordship, or of any one belonging to him, till a few months ago," I continued. This seemed to increase their astonishment.

"Surely you must have heard, Mr. Mutford, that Lord Lintern has but lately acquired his title?" asked Mr. Snow.

"Yes, sir; but heard it only by chance, and not before the time I have mentioned."

"And also that he changed his family name, upon acquiring it, at the instance of the maternal relation, who bequeathed to him his last great accession of property?"

"No, Mr. Snow, that escaped me: but, in fact, my absence from England, either in France or the West Indies, until a few weeks before I came here, coupled with great seclusion from the world, and great indifference to its affairs,—nay, avoidance of them,—easily explains my ignorance on even more important matters."

"Then Mr. Mutford still remains ignorant of the former family name of Lord Lintern?" demanded Lady Ellen, seemingly in a kind of agitation that anticipated something extraordinary to come.

"Quite so," I answered: and, Graves, I shared her embarrassment; for now I, too, had my bodings.

"This is very, very extraordinary," resumed Mr. Snow: did your father's solicitor, Mr. Mutford, give him no information of a necessity for changing the name and description of the defendant in a certain suit?"

"My father's solicitor, sir!' I became terribly and irrecoverably aroused;—old hate—loathing—and a poignant new impatience at discovering who had been my late antagonists in defence of my sister, deprived me of all

self-control: — "my father's solicitor, sir! I tell you, for the information of my Lord Lintern, that, during the last three years, my father has had no solicitor in that certain suit! he *would* not stay in court as a pauper — at least not while I lived to earn money for a future effort — and that's the reason he *has* had no solicitor, sir! — And now, sir, you are answered!" Graves, I am a savage: in my fierce passion, I thought neither of the saint-like being before me, nor of his attendant seraph: indeed, I suppose I had lost even the physical power of seeing who stood there to receive the brunt of my blind rage. "And being answered, sir, — and I being made wiser than I have been, — I thank *you* for it: — you must permit me to wish you a good morning! my father awaits my services — my menial services, sir, — to rise from his sick bed, above stairs; and your friend, Lord Lintern, may be glad to hear that, too! — Your servant, sir! — your most humble and obliged servant, madam!"

And I was hurrying, with profuse bows, out of the room, like the bedlamite I am, regardless of the earnest and solemn entreaties of Mr. Snow, and the terrified and weeping supplications of Lady Ellen, both praying me to hear a word of explanation, when the door opened suddenly, and Bessy, also frightened, and asking what was the matter, ran in to us. The result of this interruption quite bewildered me. Lady Ellen flew to my sister, took her hands, and said — "For your sake, my dear — for your sake he will stay and hear us: pray, ask him, ask him; and let me bribe you with a single word!" Here she whispered an instant in Bessy's ear, and almost before she had done, Bessy half-screamed, and dropped sitting on a chair, seemingly petrified. I only conceived — if I conceived any thing — that this was an additional outrage upon us by one of a detested family; and, without another word, I took Bessy's arm and left the room with her, forcing her out. They sent Lucy Peat with messages, requesting me to return a moment. I begged to be excused; and at last they rode off from our door together.

Leaving Bessy to the attentions of her worthy maid, I turned to wind up my correspondence with Lord Lintern.

I was in a pretty mood for the task, you will say. Judge. I tore in pieces the peaceful answer I had written to him, accepting his son's explanation, if the address were altered; and I wrote another note, imperatively and savagely calling for an abject apology, merely on the score of having been described as "*Mr.* Michael Mutford;" and I was very rationally about to despatch this scrawl by the livery servant still in waiting, when, sent in by the guardian angel of my character for common sense, your brother appeared. Of course he had a right to request a view of my effusion; and I need not add, that he immediately insisted, notwithstanding my reasons for a change of temper towards Lord Lintern, upon destroying, in its turn, my amended note, substituting a fresh copy of my first, under the unsealed envelope which had contained it and the "Mr. Michael Mutford" explanation of my honourable half-cousin, and delivering both to the courier with his own hand.

Although Alexander compelled me to this act of consistency, he could not succeed in putting me into good humour; nay, I am sure, in saving himself from some ebullitions of the disagreeable mood I was in: and so, tiring of me, no doubt, he went away, promising another call in the course of the day, to ascertain the final close of our affair with Lord Lintern.

The whisper in Bessy's ear now took possession of me, and I considered it, with a view to comprehend it, until it became as hateful as a serpent's hiss in my brain. I bounded up stairs, and finding her alone, though not perfectly recovered from the effects of her agitation, directly and abruptly asked her to tell me what Lady Ellen had said to her, to cause her such distress.

"Why, Michael, was it not enough to startle me, as it did?" she said, composedly: indeed, with more self-possession than I had ever before seen her command; and I observed that, although still weak, she had been remarkably thoughtful as I entered the little sitting-room.

"I cannot judge," I answered, "until you shall have told me *what* it was, Bessy."

"And yet you were greatly agitated yourself at hearing who Lord Lintern is, Michael?"

"And that was all you learned from the whisper, Bessy, my love?"

"Could I have learned any thing else?"

It appeared to me, Graves, that she was deliberately trying to baffle me. I looked at her an instant. Doubtless to my inward impatience, the gentle and timid Bessy stood my glance. I shut the door; walked back to her, and said, vehemently, though in a very low voice—"Bessy, tell me the whole truth; take me out of horrible doubts and misgivings; or, Bessy, I will lead you by the hand into our sick father's chamber, and instruct *him* how to repeat my question to you."

She dropped on her knees at my feet, taming even my humour by her tremendous anguish, as, imitating my low voice, she answered—"Michael, I cannot tell you the whole truth, because I have taken an oath not to do so, for the present—but do not make me kill my father!"

"An oath?" I repeated—"an oath to conceal what, Bessy, my little dear? to *hide* what? your——"

"No, no, Michael; do not speak the word that your lips are forming!—I cannot break my oath; but I will take another to you that you have no cause to be angry with me for my silence! that nothing is concealed; or, as you have said, hidden, which Bessy, your sister, ought to blush to make known! and more—that *we* are silent for a while, only to make sure of doing *you* good, dear Michael!"

"*We*, Bessy? who, besides yourself, do you call *we?*"

"In pity, in mercy, in justice, and in manhood, Michael, ask me no more questions!—or if you will, dear brother, in spite of all these considerations,—if you will, I must still be silent! I must,—indeed, I must!"

"Well, Bessy, thanks for your zeal in my behalf—in taking this course to do me good,"—I laughed,—"and thanks for the little oath you promise me, on my account: kneel down again, with me, and give me your innocent hands, Bessy." I held them tight,—"and now, swear by our dead mother to the truth of what you tell me."

She did so; and with such pure and angel-like energy—her glorious black eyes turning upward as if to fix them

on her whom she invoked, in Heaven — that, whether or no I felt convinced — and I cannot even now answer the question — I embraced my little sister, as we knelt together, and tears assuaged the hot vehemence of my mood.

Indeed, I admit that all that I have recently been recounting to you, dear Graves, will read very much like the transcript of a madman's mind. I am calmer, now, however; and only, or chiefly, worried with one question: namely, where or how am I to *get money* to transport my father and Bessy far from this detested place — far from all possible future contact with the destroyers of our earthly peace — for as to poor Bessy's secret, and her alliance with some of them "to do me good," I laugh heartily, indeed, at that. Beyond any question, they only impose on her credulity, for some reason not worth my finding out, if, in truth, it be only an idle reason, and not big with evil to her and to me, and to her wretched father — and there comes back a former fear — but, hell-spectre! I banish you from me — if I can.

Ay, Graves, for a host of reasons we ought not to stay here an hour longer, if possible; but where is what makes the old mare go? — the money, the money, my good friend. You will read this yet, and censure me in your heart, and to your utmost, for putting the question. Do so, if you like. I have vowed it unto myself, Graves, never again to stand a pauper debtor before one of my fellow-men — I mean, to an amount greater than I am at present — that I owe to half a dozen others, as well as to you — common acquaintances — men that talk of my poverty, and of my obligation to them. No. I have had enough of that. And I have now enough of other things, heaped upon it, to keep me from encountering any more of it. If I am to starve — or beg — or any thing else — notwithstanding my utmost efforts to make money of my own — nay, if I cannot save my father and my sister but by drawing upon the resources of others — let it be so: let them not be saved. Whose fault will it be? *Our* misfortune; our fate, altogether — but whose fault? Eternity! prepare your scourges for him whose name — whose *new* name could here be written down in answer!

I say, my only friend, neither Heaven nor man expect me to plunder you (and if not *you*, who else?) any longer. And I say, again, that if the worst must come, *let* it come.

But I am erratic and inflated, out of time, and out of measure, as usual—as ever. To be sure I am. Cannot I stay here, without even going out of the house, till money comes, at its own good leisure? And doubtless it will come.

"Harold," my hero! *you* won't fail me? The day of his first rehearsal is now near at hand, Graves, and I have saved out of the Magazine man's munificent present as much as will get me a ride up to town on the top of a coach, at all events: and then, as you are still on circuit, I shall have your chambers and little Joey, you know—so, huzza!

* * * *

It is thought unnecessary to point out from time to time the portions of his journal which Mutford withheld from his friend. They will be guessed at, as they occur, even when he does not express his determinations towards them, if his character and complexion of mind have become sufficiently obvious. Moreover, Richard Graves shall presently appear acting in such a manner as may help to show how much of his confidence Michael Mutford hesitated to impart to him; although, be it added, the journal eventually got into the hands of the young barrister, in the same unmutilated form in which, (with his permission) it is now transcribed.

And we interrupt Mutford, a second time, in this place, for the purpose of continuing the history of him, and of many with whom he has made us acquainted, in a way less favouring of the affectation of mystery than his journal, in its most perfect and consecutive shape, can present: and notwithstanding that it is from his own subsequent experience and information that the facts immediately following are (necessarily) drawn, it would have been well

for poor Mutford if his knowledge of his own affairs had come to him, in reality, as much in series as they are at present about to be rehearsed.

Lady Ellen and Mr. Snow rode off from Mutford's door, greatly mortified that they could not induce him to return to the parlour and talk farther with them.

"Oh, sir," said the young lady to her companion, "much, much good might have been done if he would only have listened to us, and allowed us to soothe him; but he *will* cherish his unqualified anger and aversion, as I feared was to be the case: and so, with hate and wrath just as inveterate, and just as blind, opposed to him, in the person of my father, Heaven only knows what frightful things may happen at last."

"I perceive, indeed, with regret and grief, my dear," replied Mr. Snow, "that we have not found in the poor young gentleman sufficient predisposition for your contemplated good work of forgiveness and love between all parties. Sufficient material for it, I do not say; because, indeed, this very vehemence we deplore could, under fit direction, be a something else, — (nay, *is* a something else,) — fully answering to your purpose. Suppose we ride back in an hour or two, and endeavour to soften him again?"

"I fear that cannot be, sir, for many reasons, the least of which is, what I must expect from my father on account of this unpermitted absence from his house. It seems to me that young Mr. Mutford's temper towards Lord Lintern can never, never be changed by any thing but a long-withheld act of justice to him and to his family. Without that, all our interference, all our time and opportunities.— and you know we are limited in both, — and all proposals of friendship and forgiveness between him and Augustus and me, will prove useless, if they would not harden him in his hostility. I speak of his mind on this subject upon good grounds. Four years ago he wrote to my father a letter so full of, I must call it, tremendous recrimination

and threat, that while it superfluously added to Lord Lintern's unnatural antipathy to the son of his father, and fixed him, boy as he then was, in the shape of an individual enemy before my father's eyes, also proved his own deep-rooted sense of injury, his detestation, and his burnings for revenge."

"Alas, alas, revenge! Well, well, my dear, you think it was the recollection of this letter which armed Lord Lintern with so little of conciliation towards the young man and his gentle sister, upon the occasion of their first appearance before your father on law business?"

"Certainly, sir; that and (I fear) ill-weighed impatience of what his Lordship called the cold-blooded audacity of young Mutford in taking advantage of his public liability as a magistrate to intrude himself into his presence. And then he insists that Mutford's manner during their interview, although not a word was spoken of family feuds, was provokingly marked and, indeed, audacious; I say nothing of what my father must have felt at his half-nephew's observation of the sudden appearance and vehemence of my poor brother on that occasion."

"But we can conciliate Lord Lintern, you know; at least, so far as assuring him that young Mr. Mutford did not know who he was at that time, and therefore could have meant none of the peculiarity of manner, my dear. And now, what do you propose? If we are not to return to Mutford, what are we to do?"

"Venture on our experiment so long spoken of, dear Mr. Snow. Try your powers as a peace-maker upon my father, since it is with him you must begin, if we can ever hope to touch the heart and clear the mind of Michael Mutford."

"At once, Lady Ellen?"

"At once, sir; no time is to be lost. They may meet again, and soon, now that they know where to find one another; and, considering their mutually exaggerated sentiments upon one certain subject, I need add nothing else."

"No, indeed. Do I ride direct to the house with you, then, and pass into Lord Lintern's presence by virtue of your introduction?"

"Dear Mr. Snow, if you please; though I could wish you presented by a more influential master of the ceremonies than, I fear, I shall prove at present. You are aware that my father's methodical displeasure towards me on account of my former advocacy of poor Augustus has not yet subsided; that he has called me from my banishment in that unseemly old farm-house, and again allowed me the protection of his own roof, only because he fears that Augustus, once more broken loose from his authority,— excuse me if I add, his cruel persecution,— might find me out, and concert with me new acts of rebellion; you know, sir, in fact, that upon the very same principle which sent me from home while my elder brother was near me, I have been conveyed back now that he is at large?"

"Indeed, indeed, my dear, all this is worse than I *did* know; surely I could not suppose but that your father's anger against you subsided the moment he invited you to re-enter his house, and that you enjoyed there at present the kind words and looks, and acts,—if nothing else,— of every member of your family except one,— the poor fugitive one."

"On the contrary, sir, I keep my room, or saunter out at stated hours, with the good Planche, alone and unnoticed, as if I were a stranger; and neither father, nor sisters, nor my brother George, think me yet penitent or punished enough to wish me a good morning. So, as I have said, you can reckon but slightly on the force of my introduction of you to Lord Lintern; besides, the very misdemeanour of this morning does not add to my influence."

"Well, my dear, upon your presentation I will request a word with his Lordship, notwithstanding. And, now, let us see; inasmuch as your father's chief grounds of displeasure,— and, indeed, of misconception, of frightful misconception,— against your brother are derived from Augustus's interest in those poor Mutfords, our first endeavour ought to be to effect a full and ample reconciliation between Lord Lintern and his elder son."

"Yes, Mr. Snow, if for no other reason than to lead to an adjustment, between my father and that unfortunate fa-

mily, of all their old differences; though Heaven knows there are other reasons to inspire your zeal."

"Ah, my dear, there are, indeed! reasons founded upon every thing that gives peace, and hope, and a high character to the heart and to the nature of man; upon our sense of all that is dear and great to us, here and hereafter; upon our very sense of worldly and fire-side decencies:—alas, alas, my dear! it *is* sorrowful to see the best earthly type of a state of immortal happiness,—a united and loving family of father, brothers, and sisters,—thus inverted,—thus—but pardon me, dear Lady Ellen, and rather let me ask you a question. You have told me that your brother Augustus came home from Oxford with only a few settled thoughts and principles on the one great subject; that afterwards, however, your gentle conversations, together—"

"Yes, dear sir, yes; they did, indeed, work a change, but to whose praise as the agent? Not to mine; I only feebly echoed the soothing, the tender, and the beautiful truths learned from other lips; for, indeed, Mr. Snow, until a blessed chance out of my father's house gained me your acquaintance——"

"Nay, nay, my dear, flattery of one another makes no portion of our theory of love of one another, you know; so I must not listen to you. But what you tell me of your elder brother is very pleasing. Give us but one silken thread wound round his heart, and we may hope to draw him to ourselves,—oh, better than that,—better than to ourselves; and then we need not fear to hear him repeat towards his father any of the harsh and afflicting words which, perhaps, helped more than his acts to widen the first sad breach between them: no, no, Augustus will then speak like a son to his father; ay, even though that father continue unfatherly, and the crude notions of unnatural, of unnecessary independence and equality between parent and child, which he has learned in, I fear,—(oh, indeed, my love, I fear it!)—the decomposing atmosphere of this world's morality, will appear to his mind,—nay, to his heart and spirit, and that is better again,—as foolish as they are wicked and dangerous. And now, my dear, another ques-

tion, if you please; and though it is, in truth, a very delicate one, you will perceive its necessity, inasmuch as I am called upon in prudence and good sense to prepare myself for the coming interview in the house which just begins to peep at us through the trees yonder. Would much of our late allusions, — would much of their *feeling* be understood or relished by Lord Lintern?"

"Alas, dear Mr. Snow!"

"Well, well, my love; we cannot help it: and no man ought to judge of the heart of another. But I comprehend you. The era of your father's youth — of his interior education — was not favourable to the growth and unfolding of the bud and the germ of true knowledge. It was the time of the influence of that seemingly vain-glorious, though really self-degrading philosophy, which limited all of man's power and worth to the achievement of the mere mental, sense-supplied talents of man. And if we find, at present, individuals hugging to their bosoms, in old age, the uninvestigated mistakes of early manhood, let us recollect that some allowance is to be made for even the weaknesses of a nature in which all the elements of good and bad, great and little, generally work with alternate vigour. No, my dear, no; we must not, we will not, I mean, have less zeal in our proposed task, nor less interest in your father, on that account: for, mistake as he may, he cannot pluck out of the very centre of himself his own noblest point of identity. He *is* what he says he is *not*, say what he can; all he has been made; all we can make him; though, indeed, not all he can, of himself, cause himself to be. Well — our conversation with him must then take a more worldly character than we could have preferred (or, it is better so to anticipate, and leave a good chance to God): and here I have yet another claim for information. Different persons of my acquaintance represent Lord Lintern's manners differently. Tell me, yourself, my dear, for what I am to prepare on this score."

"I had better say, Mr. Snow, that — particularly considering the nature of the subject to be discussed between you and him — you may find my father abrupt, if not peremptory."

"No matter, my dear; one can easily arrange not to take notice, you know; besides, I am a clergyman; and, as I understand, other gentlemen of my cloth are welcome at his house, whatever may be his private philosophy."

"But not welcome in a way you would choose to give occasion for, dear sir; in fact, we have but two reverend visiters — Dr. Bailey and his curate; and they are only welcome to dinner — and to after-dinner, I believe — and to their share in the high conviviality which, after his day of varied cares and troubles, my father thinks fit to indulge in."

"Well, my love. I am sure — although you have repeatedly warned me to expect much excitement, and its results, during this interview — I am at least sure I shall not be offended."

"Dear Mr. Snow, my father knows no bounds to his temper or words on the topic you are to enter upon with him — Augustus and I have sent peacemakers to him before now, and — and he *did* offend them."

"I shall escape, however; for, in such a situation, I *will not* be hurt with any thing. So, we are now quite prepared. I make not the least doubt of having received from you a full admission of the faults committed, and the provocations given by your brother, throughout the whole matter."

"Dear sir, I have indeed been quite candid with you."

"No doubt, no doubt, my dear; and you would have been so from a sense of truth as much as for his sake and interests, which require an ample knowledge of his case in an advocate. Then, as I understand, extravagance at college was in reality his first offence?"

"That, sir, and of course the ill-spent time and — why should we hide it? — the not creditable courses attendant upon such extravagance: although, as, amidst all his affluence and success, my father is remarkably careful in money matters, perhaps we may say he felt most anger at Augustus's prodigal sins."

Mr. Snow made his own comment upon this hint. It tallied with the whispers of common fame, which attributed a degree of avarice to the seemingly ill-balanced character of the new Earl.

"You will not forget, however," continued Lady Ellen, "that my father's notions of absolute authority over his children must have added to his displeasure against Augustus, when he found his commands broken through, his renewed injunctions made light of, and, finally, his parental power defied, and demands substituted for requests."

Again Mr. Snow interpreted Lady Ellen's words to mean that Lord Lintern sought to reign in his own family as a despotic chief rather than as a beloved father. He did not, however, excuse in his own mind the conduct of the despot's son, who, because a slavish obedience had been required of him, demurred to a show of obedience of any kind.

"And then, my dear, in the climax of their unhappy bickerings, arose the question of the Mutfords, and then ——" Mr. Snow paused.

"And then, sir, came the miserable charge against poor Augustus," added Lady Ellen, in a broken and distressed voice.

"We will hope, my love, that Lord Lintern conscientiously believed he had grounds for that charge."

"Dear Mr. Snow, we will! oh, indeed, sir, I do pray such may be the case! Though, alas! sir, it is wretched to think that my poor brother was not suspected of any thing like it until after his discovery of the legal secret which would confer—if made known—a late justice and a most needful relief on our poor relations, the Mutfords—oh, Mr. Snow, I repeat, it is frightful to think of the coincidence! And to hinder myself from dwelling upon it, I do also repeat your hope, over and over, that my father may have been sincerely convinced, before he expressed that opinion of his elder son."

"Does it seem certain, my love, that the false and perjured witness, in your father's favour, and against the legal claims of his half-brother, Mutford senior, made no declaration of his crime to any person but Augustus?"

"It is quite true, I am sure, sir. The man's illness and death were very sudden, and followed close upon one another; and though my brother hastened to his bedside the instant he got his summons, the unhappy man had

only time to acknowledge his falsehood, when he was called before a tribunal where there can be no perjury given or taken. Augustus sent, indeed, for an attorney, as also for our father, but both came too late."

"Did your brother communicate the dying man's words to Lord Lintern immediately, and in the presence of the attorney?"

"No, sir. A fear — an afflicting — an appalling fear, on his father's account, made him defer the disclosure till they were alone."

"I am sorry he deferred it; particularly when he had no good grounds for that fear, inasmuch as the repentant perjurer acquitted Lord Lintern of all share in his false story — have you not told me so, Lady Ellen?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Snow; and thank heaven, I was, and am, able to add that piece of information! Yes, indeed: the man solemnly assured Augustus that he invented and imposed upon our father a story which would signally defeat the claim of the Mutfords — (and for the plausibility of which his former position among the parties was, unfortunately, a seeming guarantee,) — solely out of his own wicked mind, in the view of rendering a service which would be sure to be rewarded."

"But Lord Lintern gave no credit to his accusation of himself?"

"Worse than that, sir. He gave no credit to Augustus's report of it: but when my poor brother, prompted by his noble and generous, though neglected and uneven nature, urged instant reparation of the wrongs we had unconsciously heaped on the Mutfords, by the perjurer's aid, Lord Lintern was at first cruel enough to accuse Augustus himself of a deliberate invention, got up in revenge for their former bickerings, in order to embarrass his father — and then, so soon as Augustus (very indiscreetly, I own,) began to threaten public exposure, the London doctor came down to us, and pronounced the judgment, and signed the certificate which placed my brother in restraint, out of our house, though within view of it, at the mercy of the at least as accommodating surgeon of the next village."

"But surely more reasons for forming his opinion must have been submitted to the London doctor than Augustus's simple report of the dying man's declaration?"

"Oh yes, sir; and, indeed, more likely ones, I admit: poor Augustus's rude and violent contentions with his father; his escape from home, for many months, we know not whither, but certainly with no creditable companions, or upon no becoming occupations — for when he returned to us, even his attire, to say nothing of his manners, hinted that he had not spent his time well: but, most of all, my father insisted that once, when he jumped through the window of the room where the London police officer had him in charge, it was with the shocking view of destroying himself. I am willing, Heaven knows, Mr. Snow, to excuse the doctor for the afflicting decision to which he came — yes, even though I am aware that the fee he received was an enormous one."

"Well, well, my dear. I do allow that the power left in the hands of such professional gentlemen is excessive, and, as things now stand, liable to shocking abuse. But let us see if we cannot convince Lord Lintern that the London practitioner has mistaken his patient's case on the present occasion. The judgment of my eminent medical friend who met your brother in my house by your invitation, joined indeed to my own, though I can speak but as an observer, going by common sense, ought to have some weight."

"Heaven grant it, sir — to save us all from worse and worse affliction."

"If no effect be produced, your brother is determined, during his present absence from home, to disprove, in a public manner, the charges made against his sanity?"

"Alas, dear sir, I fear nothing less. Nay, after that, I believe he purposes to see justice done to the Mutfords, by his own evidence of the dying declaration of the person whose falsehood has so long been the chief means of depriving them of their rights."

"Oh, I hope, I hope, my dear, that things may never turn out so between them and him and his father. The public investigation would be scandalous to a Christian

nation. Surely, surely, Lord Lintern will not be found quite proof against facts and reason, sense and prudence, feeling and nature. Surely, if we can but convince him of his son's sanity — after obtaining his forgiveness for things done before the occasions which arose to supply a doubt of it — all may yet be well. Tell me, my love, Are you the only advocate of Augustus with his father?"

"Indeed, indeed, sir, I am. My gay and happy sisters laugh at a story which threatens them with a diminution of fortune; and my brother George will not be at the trouble, I believe, of considering the subject at all — particularly — forgive me what seems ill-nature, sir, but *is* truth — particularly when implicit acquiescence in all his father's present views, opinions, and feelings, must redound, by contrast, to his future advantage."

"Let us rather say, dear Lady Ellen, that his mind is not of that active and enquiring order which will make an effort to ascertain truth in the midst of contradiction. Well, here we enter Lord Lintern's avenue, at any rate, and so are very near to certainty, one way or another, upon all these topics. But I see a carriage at the door — and if your father prepare to go out, what then?"

Lady Ellen assured her friend, that he need not fear such a disappointment. Her father never left home before the expiration of the time allotted to magisterial duties; and it must be her sisters who had ordered the carriage for an early ride. "Should we happen to meet them, sir," she continued, "before entering the house, you may see a proof of the light in which (by my father's command, I hope, rather than from their own hearts,) I have the misfortune at present to stand in their favourable opinion."

Even while Lady Ellen spoke, she and her reverend friend came close to the open carriage, and her elder sisters issued through the hall-door to ascend it. As the fair peace-maker had anticipated, the long-nosed ladies just paused an instant to regard her, and then seated themselves and were whisked off from the house.

Lady Ellen led the way into a parlour, and sent a message by a servant to her father. In a few minutes, Mrs. Planche entered to reply to it. The good lady seemed to

have been weeping, and was otherwise agitated and nervous. She drew her young charge aside, and in obvious distress, and as if against her own will, enforced some command, of which she had been made the bearer. Mr. Snow saw his sweet friend become embarrassed and agitated in her turn; saw her remonstrate in a low voice, pause, and hesitate; then she suddenly addressed him, her hand stretched out, and tears in her eyes.

"I cannot have the honour and pleasure, after all, Mr. Snow, of introducing you to my father; his only answer to my message is a wish that I retire directly to my chamber:—however, as I told you, little will be lost by that; perhaps 'tis better you are spared my questionable patronage. And oh, dear sir, I entreat you not to give up your good intention, on this account; your own request to see Lord Lintern must be promptly attended to—and so, sir, farewell—I cannot say for how long a time."

Mr. Snow warmly returned her adieus. She withdrew, followed by her companion. He summoned a servant, sent the message she had suggested, and, indeed, was in Lord Lintern's presence a few moments afterwards.

"I am under the necessity of introducing myself, Lord Lintern," began Mr. Snow, bowing, while every action and look, to say nothing of his general appearance and manner, proclaimed the gentlest of gentlemen, and while his new acquaintance, sitting in the same official chair in which he had received poor Michael Mutford and his sister, took little trouble to welcome the visitor.

"And a very good introduction, doubtless, sir," said the Earl, in his usual hard way, with a sneer under it.

"My name, perhaps, you may have heard," continued the clergyman, sitting, uninvited: "it is Snow."

"No, I have not been so fortunate, till this moment, sir;" and in saying this, Lord Lintern said not the truth. But he was preparing and steeling himself for what he guessed was to follow.

"Well, my Lord—I trust I shall not be the less at liberty to request your attention and good-will to what I may have to say."

"It is quite unnecessary, as well, I believe, as rather

unusual, sir, for a gentleman to require an introduction to a magistrate on public business," observed his Lordship, again equivocating with his own presentiments, while again he fixed himself upon the ground he had determined to take in the coming conversation.

"But, allow me to add, that I do not pray your ear on public business."

"Indeed, sir?"

"No, indeed—but, with your kind leave, on business of quite a private nature."

"Business of a private nature between two gentlemen unacquainted with each other?"

"But, I hope, Lord Lintern, I anxiously hope, not to continue unacquainted;" and here Mr. Snow smiled one of those beautiful smiles which Mutford has called irresistible—without an exception.

"Pray oblige me, Mr. Sn—S—Slowe, I believe?"

The intended mistake was urbanely and good-humouredly corrected.

"Pray oblige me. Mr. Snow, with an account of this—I must beg leave to suggest—rather extraordinary private business in which two individuals, you and I, who never saw each other before, are to prove so very personally concerned."

"For myself, my Lord, I am not personally concerned, at least, no farther than hopes, wishes, regrets, and deep anxiety make me—and—allow me to correct myself—they *do* make me personally concerned, deeply, really so; and will you not permit me to add, that this may happen without subjecting me to the charge of officiousness; that it may happen, naturally and involuntarily, to any one of us, to feel sincerely for the happiness of——"

"Excuse me, sir, but what can you mean by this exordium, so very like the beginning of an excellent homily? Permit me in my turn to ask, plainly, upon what business I have the honour of seeing you?"

"I come to crave permission to speak one word with you, Lord Lintern, on the part of an afflicted, an offending, but a truly penitent member of your family."

The Earl, uttering what he meant to be a very cutting

"Sir!" thrust his hand into his bosom, let his head fall against the high back of his chair, drew in his dry and liny lips, and continued to work them, in that position, while his body moved quickly from side to side, and his small but brilliant eyes twinkled, without passing from the face of his visiter. Mr. Snow remained silent, his benevolent smile still beaming.

"And, perhaps, you will be good enough to tell me, sir, by what right a total stranger to me craves permission to speak with me of *any* member of my family?"

"My dear Lord Lintern, I know I expose myself to, and perhaps deserve some reprehension for my freedom; but, indeed, indeed, I have the right; pause a moment, and you will concede it to me, yourself,—and I was about to say something of the kind before. The right to wish to see my fellow-beings happy—as happy as an earthly lot, blessed with all means of happiness, can make them.—Besides—though I scarce urge the point, I do not come here unsolicited, nor in the light of a self-elected advocate."

"So, sir, so," Lord Lintern continued, nodding his head in mock emphasis, and what he wished to appear most imperturbable self-command, "the accredited agent of Lord Allen."

"Of your elder son."

"Of Lord Allen," slowly repeated his Lordship.—"Sir," rising, "your very obedient servant—I wish you a good morning, sir."

"Nay, dear Lord Lintern, I beseech your attention, I implore your confidence, one moment; I cannot, indeed I cannot leave your presence, even though you insist on my doing so."

Mr. Snow would not stand up. The Earl continued to regard him a moment, his hand still thrust in an old-fashioned, theatrical way into his bosom, and his head slightly jerking from side to side. Then he suddenly faced round to a window, walked slowly to it, threw it up, and called out, again in the theatrical fashion—"Who waits there?"

Two able-bodied men, out of livery, appeared at the outside of the window.

"Look well to your duty," he continued; "I have another visiter this morning, and the principal may not be far off." The men ducked their heads, scraped their toes on the gravel, and passed out of sight.

"You can tell your client, sir, that I am at least prepared against any renewed and more serious attack upon my person," he added, turning to Mr. Snow.

"Lord Lintern! what superfluous as well as shocking fancy do you conjure up!"—And here, on the threshold of his attempt, Mr. Snow's heart nearly failed him, so repulsed and so sickened was it, at, he thought, this affectation of a fear for his personal safety put on by the old man in order to assume additional grounds of dissent to a reconciliation with his son. Or, if it could not be called affectation, in reality! if the father's miserable hate and dislike were, indeed, so strong, as to make him absolutely fear what he professed to fear!

Mr. Snow's disturbed reverie of a moment was interrupted. Lord Lintern advanced to him, repeating—"Fancy, sir? you attribute fancies to me on the subject?"

"Nay, Lord Lintern, I attribute nothing—I wish to attribute nothing—indeed I do not—which can hurt or offend you. But, surely you are mistaken, as any one of us may be, at any time. If I thought, if I suspected you were not—if you can give me the slightest proof that you are not——"

"You would then, I presume, allow yourself to be civilly bowed out of my house, sir, at the second or third attempt?"

"I would certainly not request permission to keep my seat as the *exculpator* of the individual whom you call—my client."

"Well, sir, as neither your years nor appearance, nor, indeed, manners, allow me to form any scheme for being left alone, in which I may not be able to induce you to join—" (Mr. Snow bowed gratefully for the niggard and questionable compliment)—"yes, sir, I say so much—and be assured that were not your manners and words exactly what they are, our interview could not have continued longer than other interviews, which your principal

has tried to force me into with other agents, in this room —and that was no longer than the few seconds necessary for the entrance of my watchful attendants, sir — the resolute men you have seen."

Again Mr. Snow bowed: and Lord Lintern's passion for despotism, particularly in the present affair, experienced enough gratification to permit him to talk more at length than he had contemplated in his first stern and lofty determinations — (ay, indeed, all passions, all moods of all passions — despair itself, can be flattered into inconsistency.) "It is your opinion, sir, that my apprehensions are fanciful. Sir, could it have been fancy which, after *his* second elopement from Oxford to my house — pursued by sheriff's officers — in debt ten times beyond the annual amount of a liberal — a princely annuity — his books, his horses, his carriage, his very watch and wardrobe sold — as a sottish, mean mechanic sells his bed and working-tools to support his credit at the gin tavern ——"

"Very bad, very bad," interrupted Mr. Snow, seeing an opportunity for a plea — "I agree with you; very bad — and he agrees, too — indeed he does — is sincerely sorry and contrite — implores you to hear him say so, and to pardon him ——"

"Could it have been fancy, I demand, sir?"

Mr. Snow was interrupted in his turn, and Lord Lintern now spoke in his hardest voice and manner — "Could it have been a conjuring up of a chimera, when, at that time, he compelled me to send to London for a Bow Street officer — and, solely in order to save him and me from public disgrace — advise with a brother magistrate how to keep him secured from — laying hands on me? — What, sir?"

"He surely never intended the act, whatever may have been his language, my Lord; in a state of youthful desperation, as we may call it, brought on certainly by his own follies and sins, but added to, you will allow, by ——"

"By what, sir? Pray, let me have the benefit of your high opinion."

"By an union of hot and bitter feelings, which few of us, even in mature age, are at all times able to resist —

humbled pride, shame, exposure, and, as he thought, disgrace, before his young friends."

Lord Lintern was disappointed of an expected opportunity for overwhelming his visiter. He had reckoned upon hearing an accusation against his own parsimony and harshness. His collected wrath condescended to ooze out in a smiling sneer: —

"I will praise him for one act of discernment, sir — he has employed a good *advocate*, indeed."

Mr. Snow willingly answered by almost a good-natured laugh, and bowed once more.

"And must have engaged his services with a profuse fee," continued the Earl.

"A profuse one, indeed — the hope of making him and others happier, my Lord."

"Of which of the courts is that the practice, sir?" — The catechist still kept his tone; his face and his manner wrapped up in a self-asserting reserve of irony.

"As they stand at present, of no earthly one, I fear, Lord Lintern."

"Oh — oho — then I have mistaken" — (all this was vapid equivocation, still) — "you are not his earthly lawyer, at that rate, sir?"

Mr. Snow laughed again, and seemed exceedingly amused, and willing to be regarded as a fair subject for amusement.

"Pray, sir," resumed the Earl, "are you a preacher?"

"Occasionally, indeed, I do preach a sermon, as well as I know how," answered Mr. Snow: (the old hard-hearted parent, in order to rid himself of his visiter, was deliberately insulting a gentleman whose character he knew very well, and who, it was said, had declined a mitre) — "will you allow me to solicit the advantage of your presence when next I mount my pulpit?"

"I thank you profoundly, sir, and you may be assured will visit your chapel the next time I feel in want of a homily — though that may not be very soon, however."

"A forgiving heart, Lord Lintern, at peace with itself, and loving others, can always whisper to itself its own homily."

"But observe, now, Mr. Snow, you begin to indulge me, without any craving on my part."

"Well, well, my Lord, 'tis hard to forget one's trade, you know. I will try to speak with you, however, merely as a man of the world."

"Proceed — Mr. World."

"Nay, nay, now, Lord Lintern, do not suspect me of that egotism — indeed, indeed, I assume the representation of no opinions but my own; and merely in such a view permit me to ask you — standing so high as your name and character do stand — if the unhappy circumstances we have been alluding to are allowed to continue unaltered — nay, if they produce others of a still more unhappy description, in consequence of their unmitigated continuance — what, think you, will even that World say?"

"I comprehend you, sir; and you really so far flatter me as to wish my candid opinion?"

Mr. Snow replied, still soothingly.

"I will tell you then what I think it will say. Mark you, we now only consider occurrences of an old date. It will say, that the father who felt himself called upon to protect his — life — by the interference of civil authority and power ——"

"Oh, my dear Lord Lintern, that *was* a misconception, though a natural one ——"

"Hear me, sir. It will say, that the son, who, after causing such precautions to be taken, eloped from his father's home in the middle of the night, but half attired — spent months out of society, — no one can *prove* where — but, on the evidence of a well replenished purse, and other things, any one may conjecture — among persons beyond the pale — ay, the legal pale — of *all* society ——"

"Doubtless, my Lord, oh, doubtless — nay, I will pledge myself — he can satisfactorily explain his conduct on that occasion ——"

"Mr. Snow — reverend sir" — resumed Lord Lintern, stepping back, and hugging his arms together over his chest, as if to suppress, with the stern grandeur of infelt injury and conscientious approval, a natural and great rising-up of wrath — "you have chosen to interrupt me repeatedly, after requesting my explanation — we shall have therefore concluded, in good earnest, after I say one word

more. Before he sent you, sir, to overcome me here at a single blow, (single sermon,) he sent others — waited upon by others still — fellows lounging about my house, who, I believe in my heart and soul, had different modes of convincing in store for me ——"

"Lord Lintern, Lord Lintern — do not go on — this is too revolting ——"

"Sir, I do go on. Sir, I will go on. And do you not prepare to make me anathema? Sir — know that the man we speak of deputed, to demand a supply of money from me, here, in my own house, another man whom the law of the land had bound over to keep the peace towards another father — a young, unbearded, but finished outcast, like himself — and, sir, here I was bullied, and laughed at, and threatened — and know farther, sir, that I have some proof —— How now?" He interrupted himself to turn to a servant who entered with a letter of a bulky size. He tore open the envelope, and the contents proved to be those forwarded to him from Michael Mutford, at the interference of Lieutenant Graves, a short time before. His tintless, bust-like old face glared a moment through all its wrinkles, as he read Mutford's note, enclosing back his son George's apology. Then he advanced upon Mr. Snow, the papers in his left hand, and striking them with his right-hand fore-finger, continued — "See, sir — I was proceeding to speak of a matter with which these are connected. You have heard, sir, doubtless, of the attempt to force my younger son and myself into a duel — here is the correspondence on that subject, yet unconcluded; and, sir, I have some proof, I say, that this attempt, on the part of the most deadly, the sworn and devoted enemy of me and my family — has been countenanced by Lord Allen — has been prompted by him; — that he and the Mutfords planned it together, as they plan other things against my honour and my interests; and I call their conspiracy a new plot to shorten my life, sir — to shorten it for their own views, sir —— So, George." His hitherto favourite son lounged into the room, but it was evident that Lord Lintern now addressed him in rigid displeasure: their few words, aside, near the window, are added, although Mr.

Snow could not overhear them. "Look here, George Allen: I thought you had at last ended this matter with the consistency, if not the spirit, of a young man of honour: after having first exposed me, by your imprudence, to the foulest, though I must say, manful and — hate him as I may — necessitous insult of Michael Mutford."

"Our friends advised me as they thought fit," observed "the boy."

"*Your* friends, you mean, sir, not mine; — not mine, on that occasion, nor for the future, on account of it: in my own house, sir, on a point which concerned my own honour, I should have been first consulted; and if I had, we should both have escaped this triumph of the Mutfords over us — for I insist, sir, this time, at least, they are in the right; neither love nor aversion, sir, knows an exemption from the laws of honour: and besides, to have apologised as a gentleman would, under all the circumstances, have best defeated your enemies and mine."

"If one had to do it *to* gentlemen," said his son George — "men of property in the county."

"Go, go, sir, and alter the address on the back of that note, directly: — and let me tell you, I doubt the motive of your rent-roll calculations."

"They are excessively troublesome persons," resumed the Honourable George, yawning out his words, as he took up the note and retired to do as he was bid.

"I doubt it, indeed," was the father's involuntary and painful reflection: "and, whatever may be my other thoughts of the man who *was* his brother, I know he would at least have saved me from this."

Mr. Snow had not sat idly during the pause in the conversation between him and Lord Lintern. The exaggerated and unfounded allusions of his Lordship's speech, before the entrance of the servant, proposed the only good opportunity which had yet occurred for pleading the cause of the Mutfords and Lord Allen together. And accordingly the apology-writer had scarce retired, when Mr. Snow resumed his task.

He could prove, he said, that, so far from any collusion having ever taken place between Lord Allen and Michael

Mutford, they were not even personally known to each other. Lord Lintern smiled. "Nay," Mr. Snow continued, "I can prove also, to your Lordship's satisfaction, that the Mutfords are not yet aware of the discovery made by your elder son in their favour ——"

"The discovery? in their favour? What discovery?" — questioned Lord Lintern, growing passionate, though he endeavoured to remain calm.

"The dying words of ——"

"The dying words!" he echoed, starting back, and losing self-command. "The imaginary ravings of a madman! of a madman, who has been a rebel and a ruffian to his father — and who would have been his murderer!"

"For mercy's sake, my Lord, — for nature's sake — for all our sakes — give up those illusory ——"

"Illusory, sir? — illusory, Mr. Preacher? — and you, too, have heard that tale, sir? — how, I pray you? from whom? But no matter. Let it be known; I shall only act more firmly in the case of its raving author. Good day, sir."

"Dear Lord Lintern, *if* it were a true tale — *if* you could be brought to believe so?"

"Good day, sir, I say — *if* it were! ay, if it were as true as daylight, they shall establish its truth, before they compel me ——"

"Nay, nay, I am sure you would not need to be *compelled* then, Lord Lintern."

"You are, sir? so very sure? — look ye, reverend gentleman. 'Tis your *profession*, at least, to preach down hate — honest hate — stored up eternally for injury received. But 'tis not mine. No, nor my practice. I *do* hate them — ay, from my heart to my teeth — *because* they have ——"

"Injured you? *they* injure — *you?* — *they*, the humiliated — the impoverished — the defeated — *you* ——"

"*I* the affluent, the successful!" laughed the old man, at last completely roused — "Ay — even so, sir! — Mark you — I do not say their poisoned arrow pierced me — but it was shot, sir — and the bow drawn to its utmost bend, although the shaft flew wide and harmless! A word in

your ear, sir. The very charge which I have made good against them, and, on it, beggared them — crushed them — they began by whispering against me! that very charge! that very tainting, degrading, withering one! D' you hear, sir? — Good day, good day."

"But, even so, they *starve*, Lord Lintern, at present."

"Do they so!" he laughed again, in a low key.

"Lord Lintern, I implore, I conjure you, listen to me tranquilly for a moment. In the name of prudence, if not of ——"

"Prudence? and you, too, end with a threat, sir?"

"Oh, far, very far from me be the thought! Indeed, Lord Lintern, you mistake me, — and you mistake other things, — pray allow me — *that* is what I aim at saying. Suppose, now — in the name of good sense I repeat, — suppose your opinion of the present state of mind of your elder son should prove unfounded ——"

"Ah! I knew it would come out: — well, sir, suppose it. Then, of course, he *has* heard those last true and dying words which —— Pray oblige me, sir, by answering one question in your turn. You fear, do you not, that during his present trip from home, your client may seek to reverse the medical judgment already recorded?"

"And now, my dear Lord, reflect — and say that I did fear such a wretched event?"

"Who waits there?" interrupted Lord Lintern, a second time throwing up the window, and a second time his life-preservers appeared. "This gentleman requests to be shown to the avenue-gate," he resumed.

"I could kneel to you, Lord Lintern, not to break up our interview at this moment," pleaded Mr. Snow, as the men paced to the hall-door. "Think how horrible will be the contention! think what men will say, if you forget what God must judge. Or, for the present, let us pass the Mutfords, and speak only of your repentant and reformed, though once very culpable son."

"This gentleman," resumed the Earl, pointing to Mr. Snow as the body-guards entered.

"He is indeed sincerely reformed, and yet, without your pardon and love, some way or another he *may* — perish!" urged the advocate, moving to depart.

"He *shall!*" answered the father.

"May I not speak of him again? Some other time, when you ——"

"Good day, sir," and Mr. Snow was almost literally handed out by the fellows in waiting.

"Appalling!" said the good man to himself, as trembling and weak in every limb, he rode off from the house of hate and strife; "and yet these things *do* happen in our land."

He had scarce left the library, when Lord Lintern walked up steadily to the apartments of his younger daughter.

"Madam, by your leave," he began, bowing to Mrs. Planche, — that lady withdrew.

"Lady Ellen," he continued, without seating himself, "where is the rebel at present?"

"My dear father!"

"You *know*, where?"

"I will not utter an untruth, — I do."

"But will not inform me?"

"Indeed, indeed, my Lord, I fear I cannot."

"*Will* not? 'tis the third time I have asked you; *will* not?"

She wept, and remained silent.

"As you wish, then. But now allow me to tell you the consequences against which you have been warned — and have braved. From this day forth, you are as much a rebel to me, as he is, and shall be treated as such. Prepare to travel with me, to-morrow, to your maiden aunt in Wales. Prepare to travel alone with me. Your dear Planche is relieved from farther care of you. She leaves my house without seeing you. And, till we begin our journey, to-morrow morning, others shall take care of you. Permit me, in the mean time, to remove your writing-desk. And, observe me. Any attempt to possess yourself of pen, ink and paper surreptitiously, will be punished, as well as foiled. So, farewell. Your godly orator has not been *too* successful. Farewell!"

He retired, carrying the writing-desk in his hands, and the deep sobs of his daughter followed him more than half-way down to his library.

Mutford, in continuation.

— Returned from your chambers and Joey, dear Graves, and you still on circuit. Of course you remember I went up to attend "Harold" in rehearsal. And how are they getting him out? Learn.

I saw the manager, in his room at the theatre, early the morning after my arrival. His reception of me augured well. He pledged me his solemn word that I was an honour to the British Drama (!) and then went on, unasked, to say, that there were two ways of arranging with an author for an accepted play: the one, to allow him to take his chance upon its success, at a certain sum for every third night, till the ninth, and he would reap still more emolument the fifteenth, the twentieth, and the thirtieth nights, I believe; the other, to purchase the stage-use of the piece from him, beforehand, at a price certainly less than great success might yield, but which must be considered reasonable if the chances of public opinion were taken into account, and also, that, under such a treaty, all risks lay at the door of the manager. I need scarce tell you that I at once resolved to enter into the arrangement last described. In truth, to say little of my misgiving of my own claims in any play I could write, to the unqualified success lengthened out into "the thirtieth night," ready money was my earthly god at the moment; and you will smile to hear me add that my pulses tingled with pleasure (home, father, and sisters, not forgotten in the quick association of thoughts which produced the sensation), when my beloved manager, my prince of liberal and straightforward patrons, named a considerable sum for the purchase of "Harold," out of hand, and offered me a check instanter.

"Glorious age of authorship!" I mentally exclaimed, "but glorious, above all, for dramatic authorship!"

The manager had sat down to his table, unlocked and opened a drawer, and taken out a check-book. Before he could proceed farther, some one knocked at his door, and a young man, dressed shabbily genteel, and with a spare and sallow face, whom I afterwards learned was a "copyist" of the theatre, presented himself.

"Well, Wood — has he come?" asked the manager.

"No, sir," answered Wood, gravely.

"How is that?" My patron looked perplexed; the toil-worn copyist crept deferentially to his side, whispered something, and now he grew really agitated, as, hastily returning his check-book to its drawer, he begged me to excuse him a moment: and then I was left alone.

In vain I said to myself that this interruption could have nothing to do with me or "Harold." An omen possessed me in spite of my reasoning, and I wished the check filled and signed, and safe in my pocket. The manager reappeared, sighing profoundly. "Harold" was about to be rehearsed outside, on the stage, he said, and my presence there would be necessary. I must prepare myself, however, to regret the absence of "the greater man of the two for whom I had written," as sudden indisposition kept him at home: but I could read his part, and all the other performers were at their posts. "Doubtless, he would punctually attend the very next rehearsal, for, as I had before been told, he had perused, and highly approved my tragedy, expressed gratification at the prospect of playing in it, and actually taken home his part, in his own carriage, months ago, having come to the theatre himself to demand it of the copyist; a show of interest very unusual, and highly flattering to me — though, indeed, not more so than I merited."

Ah, Graves, young as I was in a knowledge of the little world of the green-room, I did not like this insisting upon the favourable disposition of "the greater man of the two" in my regard. Nor was I comforted at perceiving that the manager proceeded to bustle through some papers before him, without again recurring to the check-drawer. "They are waiting for you to begin, Mr. Mutford," he said, seeing me stand still, "and as to the money transactions between you and me, you can step in here again after the rehearsal, you know."

I left the room, and groped my way towards the stage, through almost midnight gloom, own kicking my shin against a step, now hitting my nose against the edge of a piece of displayed scenery. The performers were, indeed,

all assembled, with the exception of the star of the first magnitude. The melancholy and cadaverous copyist introduced me, as the author of "Harold," to the prompter, (who sat at his little table, to one side, near the lamps, my well-known MS. before him,) and the prompter to the second-great man, and to two or three third-rate, "respectable" performers; and after I had stood a general stare of listless curiosity, the stage was ordered to be cleared for business. I had the honour of a crazy, rush-bottomed chair, along with the second-great man, near to the prompter; and this second-great man soon induced me to think, by his volubility, that the comparative opinion of his merits, hinted in the title I have given, formed no part of his estimation of himself — although even the tax-gatherer might have suggested to him the general notion on the subject; for his popular contemporary paid duty to the king for a regular four-wheeled carriage, while he did the same thing for only a two-wheeled, one-horse gig.

'Tis no use my tiring you with a particular account of the rehearsal. Let me only say that the false readings of the mob of inferior actors, in this, their first effort to comprehend their author — nay, the occasional lapses, in the same way, in the person of their master, for the day, filled me with astonishment, when I recollected how seemingly self-directed and intelligent is their delivery, at last, of the words written or printed for them, when they come out to amaze the public. Yes; I will add that, to my greater surprise, ay, and to my indignation, (suppressed,) my second-rate man deliberately "cut down" his part, in two or three places, where he had to go on with a "rising young actress," because — as afterwards came to my knowledge — her speeches were, for the time, more striking than his. I objected to an abridgement of my "Harold," and he undertook to demonstrate to me, in an easy, good-natured, self-supported strain of eloquence, founded on his long experience of the stage, his literary studies of the drama, and his perfect knowledge of what he called "the thick skull of audiences," that, so help him all his Divinities, he was utterly in the right, and only doing for my good.

We broke up, the tragic orator shaking me very warmly, and somewhat vehemently by the hand, at parting, and longing for the pleasure of meeting me again at the next rehearsal — that day week.

"I question if you will see him here again, sir, for all that," said a young person, at my side, one of a group of amateurs, as I had supposed, who, during our mouthing of "Harold," had stood out of the way, between two wings.

"Excuse me, Mr. Mutford," this individual continued, "but I am naturally interested for a dramatic author, being one myself, and a good deal about the theatre here;" and he proceeded to mention his name, and the latest four or five pieces he had produced, with varied success — romantic melo-dramas, and operettas, and one for the last company of horses.

"And though not in buskins now," he resumed, "I began as you have begun, and so know my men. You may have your tragedy acted, by contenting yourself with one of the two — whichever you like — (though I doubt even your chance of a choice, for, between you and me, our Roscius is losing the faculty, as well as the inclination, to commit any new lines) — but as to the project of getting them together into one new play, to run the risk of public opinion as to which part may be deemed most effective — vast, indeed, is the faith which encourages that."

"But, sir, they have both accepted their parts from the outset, and taken them home to study."

"To be sure they have," answered my new friend.

"But not sincerely with the intention of acting in my play?"

"You will see, sir — you will see: I tell you, I know my men," he answered, sagaciously.

"Perhaps you can also tell me," I resumed, "why they adopt such unnecessary duplicity?"

"Indeed, and I cannot, unless it will satisfy you to say, that such is our way, in the green-room."

"Then Mr. —— is not so very much indisposed, to-day?"

"Why, perhaps not," laughed the quadruped drama-

tist; "or he may be — a little — you comprehend me, sir?" he continued, tapping his leading finger to his forehead, and smiling pleasantly, as he withdrew.

But indeed I did not comprehend him; or, at least, but a glimmer of his possible meaning was in my mind. Clearer perceptions on the mysterious points were not necessary, however, to send me back to the manager's private room, with even a more boding heart than I had left it. My aërial funds fell fifty per cent. in my own credit. I would have given my note of hand to half the amount of the check which had been so nearly in my pocket, just to see it put down again, in a perfected form, before me.

Once more scrambling my way through the darkness behind the scenes, and knocking myself against twenty unseen things, I repaired, however, to the manager. He met me, at the door of his penetralia, in a great hurry. He was just leaving the theatre, on a sudden emergency; and, indeed, he had since been speaking with his treasurer, and that gentleman doubted if it would be well to give me a check at this moment; but we could arrange our business in another way: I might draw upon him, at three months' date, and he would accept for me, at the next rehearsal, that day week — and so he left me to get out of the intricacies and dungeon darkness of his theatre, as well as I could.

I will not trouble you, Graves, with my appreciation of the whole of this day's adventures. I will not lay before you, — in detail, at least, — my disgust, as well as my impatience, of the petty trickery to which my industry, (if nothing else,) as a writer for the stage, and one innocently impressed with reputable notions of the characters of its public servants, seemed about to be sacrificed. Ay, and my pecuniary interests (and in *my* situation!) also. But, believe me, the entire thing sickened and abashed me — (you will add, enraged and stung me). *Manager* — (what a good name!) — *actors* — (a better one!) — the man who began, like myself, in buskins — nay, the inanimate accompaniments of my position on the stage at rehearsal that day — the dusty, dingy passages —

the paltry wrong-sides of the wings and scenes: (ay, I have indeed been behind them!) the whole character of flimsy, and shifting, and daubed, and gingerbread contrivance of the place — even these, and this, qualmed me, by irresistible association, and my interior arose — not very rationally, either, — against the very physical material of a theatre.

Was I at all comforted by the floating hope of the bill, at three months? I strove to be so, as I bent my steps to dine with Bessy, by invitation, at the house of her old boarding-school mistress; for Bessy had accompanied me to town to stay a few days with this good lady, as I believe I have before told you was to happen. To the enquiries of my poor sister concerning the rehearsal, and the first night of "Harold's" coming out, in earnest, I answered as well as I could; but the state of my spirits sent me, at an early hour in the evening, to the seclusion of your chambers, dear Graves.

Very well. I employed the following seven days industriously; and my former patron of the obscure magazine actually advanced me a few sovereigns more, (and they were very welcome,) for "accepted articles." By the way, I wrote a polite note to the tenant you got me for my own chambers, hoping he might be able to settle for the few articles of furniture I left behind me; and this I did because the Jew broker, learning by some means my arrival in town, had applied to *me* to satisfy *him* for them. But my tenant as politely requested a little more time, and I strove to conciliate Moses.

The second rehearsal day arrived, and ——

But I *will*, first of all, mention a fact, Graves, distinct from "Harold," which occupies my mind, even more than he can do; and *only* mention it in this place. The previous day, passing by the house where Bessy is staying, I saw her half-cousin, George Allen, lounging near the door. He walked away at my approach. I entered the house, and asked to see its proprietress; and when we were alone together, I bluntly demanded of her if Bessy had received any visiters since her arrival in town. The good old lady looked serious and concerned, and, after a little hesitation,

answered, "Yes — one visiter." — "A young gentleman?" I was right; and Bessy's friend went on to say that her own mind had been disturbed on the subject, and she had spoken to her former pupil, and, fearing that her remonstrances might be disregarded, she had almost resolved to communicate the matter to me also, long before I had opened this conversation of my own accord.

I kept my breath and my countenance, and enquired how often the young gentleman had seen Bessy under her roof?

Twice, that is, to the school-mistress's knowledge; but she feared oftener than that, by the connivance of a servant, who, in consequence of her ill conduct, particularly on this occasion, had been discharged that morning.

I wondered how any servant could admit a visiter without the knowledge of the proprietor of the house: and what answer did I now receive? and how did it affect me? Judge from its nature. "Certainly," said the good lady, "it was impossible, or nearly so, that such a thing could happen during those hours of the day or the evening, when the owner of a house was usually most observant." My heart — my heart started, Graves, though my body and limbs were quiet! And I had something else to learn. Bessy once left the house, and remained out of it for hours, under the protection of her half-cousin, and, it seemed, accompanied by her confidential maid-servant.

Now, what did I do? Call Bessy before me? No. Indulge my temper, and the tremblings of my darkened and breaking heart, in any way? No, indeed. I only thanked the school-mistress, after a pause of reflection; requested her not to permit her visiter to see "that young person" again; added my entreaties that my sister might also remain ignorant of my knowledge of the matter; and then I quietly left the house, and went home to your chambers to finish "a literary paper."

And the next day was our second rehearsal day, and I repaired to the theatre. All of my *dramatis personæ* were assembled on the stage, with the exception only of those two who had promised to represent Harold and his Norman rival. I found my literary acquaintance of that day

week talking fluently among the third and fourth-rate actors. He nodded kindly to me, came to my side, and said, "I believe I told you?"

"What?" I asked.

"That your friend, Mr. ——," (naming the second great man,) "would not meet us here to-day?"

"And will he not?"

"The prompter has just received his written excuse for staying away — did you think that he, too, would not have his turn at putting us all out?"

"And his copy-giver?" I demanded.

"Why, just as we were going to send a call-boy to his house, his wife sent a servant to us, asking after him," smiled my colleague.

"And he was not here?"

"No — nor at home either, the last two nights; you comprehend?" and looking again very wise and expressive, my informant turned to harangue the actors.

I proceeded to the manager's room. He received me in a kind of pathetic way.

"Well, Mr. Mutford — well, sir, — and you see — I protest to you, sir, I do not know what to do, among them: look here, sir," putting a note into my hand; "my new stage-manager only wrote to him, during the last week, a matter-of-course request to know what night he would name for bringing out 'Harold;' and because I had not written myself, I suppose, or perhaps because the name of the late stage-manager did not meet his eye, — there, sir, there is what he sent us, in answer — read it, Mr. Mutford, and judge for yourself."

I opened the note, and found its substance to be the following words, penned as if by a man in an ague —

"Who the devil are *you*, sir?"

Suppressing my contempt, I asked, "Then he, too, will disappoint to-day?"

The manager had not time to reply, when a rapid knocking sounded at his door; and, at a command to come in, one of the smart and pert little porters, or door-keepers, whom I had observed (and disliked at a glance) in the dingy hall, or apartment, inside the stage-door,

thrust in his head and shoulders, and with great agitation of manner and omen of face,

(" Even such a face," &c.)

whispered out — " Oh, sir !"

" Come, at last ?" enquired the manager, also turning pale, and starting up.

" Yes, sir — but — " touching his forehead, as my horse-dramatist had done — " you know, sir."

" Ah !" groaned the manager; " I do. In his carriage — to the stage door ?"

" No, sir, on foot; and walked in through the box-office door."

" Where is he now ?"

" Pacing the front of the stage, sir — up and down — speaking to no one — and looking — you know, sir."

" Ah ! don't I ? — Mr. Mutford, I 'll step out a moment — just to observe him — to study him — from a stage-box — to read him for you — and be back in a moment."

I laughed heartily, when left alone, at the absurd and caricature-likeness which this scene bore to the sublime fright of the servant who comes in to announce to Sextus Aufidius, that Caius Marcus Coriolanus is sitting silently at his household hearth. But I could not long enjoy my mirth. The manager soon hurried back to me, as he had promised, with a stealthy step, and a face of inward agitation; and coming close to my side, said — " Not a hope of him to-day, sir — not a hope — I have studied him alone, sir, without his seeing me — there he is, still striding up and down — (in dirty boots, sir,) — every one afraid of him — and the visage, sir — the visage and the brow, hopeless, as' I 've said — haggard — wild — and — and — in fact, you know, sir — " and my manager also touched his forehead; so that the devil was in it if I did not know now.

I supposed I might go home then, for that day? The manager really could not take upon himself to say; and he was hesitating and surmising, when the prompter entered, not less fluttered than the little stage door-keeper, and said, " He has gone into the green-room, and demands to have

'Harold' *read*, instantly, by himself and all the people in attendance."

"Why, this is throwing us back, terribly," remonstrated the manager; "the tragedy was read before in the green-room, every one present but himself; and now that we have it removed to the stage, in the regular way, he sends it back to the green-room again. What *is* to be done? But I suppose he must be humoured — so, call in all the performers."

The prompter withdrew, and the manager resumed, — "Perhaps, after all, we *may*, by judicious treatment, work him on — perhaps we may, Mr. Mutford."

I thought this instant of regleaming hope favourable for presenting my three months' bill for acceptance, and accordingly I drew it forth.

"What's that?" asked my manager; "oh, I see; the bill; to be sure; just cross over to the treasury and hand it to the treasurer for entry in his books, and then come and join us in the green-room, and then — let me see — yes — after 'Harold' is read, I will go and accept it for you."

I did as I was bid. Two or three carpenters, and one or two dingy individuals of (to me) a nondescript character, directed me across the stage, and through the various doors and passages, and up the littered stairs, which led to — the treasury — (do you note how the magnificent style is used upon all possible occasions within the walls of a theatre?)

My grave, sententious treasurer examined my bill, opened a book, entered it, and laid it on his table, with the remark, that he did not think it wise of the manager to accept for such a sum within the time specified in it, "for we have heavy and numerous engagements to discharge exactly about the date at which your bill will fall due, sir;" he continued, uttering instructions (as I have since had good reason to believe) given to him by the manager, who had not enough courage or honesty to say as much to myself.

I did not think it worth my while to make any answer, but turned, merely saying "Good day," out of the treasury. "And the great man, sir, begins to *fault* your

tragedy," I heard him add, as I stumbled down stairs. And here was another hint put into his mouth for my edification.

I found my perilous way to the green-room. The great man, and all, were seated round by the walls, each with his own part in his hand; the prompter personated the second great man, holding my poor old manuscript; and the reading of the tragedy had begun before I entered. Haggard, indeed, was the countenance of the public favourite; and I wondered that the eye which a thousand critics have extolled for its gleamings behind the lamps, could seem so dull in a private room; (I ought to have made allowances, however, for its glassy stolid expression, *this* afternoon,) and that the whole appearance of the man who acted kings and heroes to the life, could, in his own clothes, be so disreputable. Nay, (Heaven pardon my simplicity!) I wondered at his private manners, too. I wondered to see him sneer, nay, laugh, whenever the poor rising young actress before spoken of, (a retiring interesting girl,) attempted to read in her best style her own part; and I suspected that a horsewhip or a respectable switch might, with some justice, have been applied to the shoulders of the half-sober fellow (not indeed by a gentleman) for interchanging, in her presence, with a third-rate actor, whom he patronised, certain signals and actions of low blackguardism, which brought the blood to her cheeks, and the tears to her eyes, more than once.

Pshaw—let me end the paltry scene—ay, and the subject. "Harold" was read. I went back to the treasury for my bill. The manager had not been there. I went to the manager's room. He had left the theatre, and, his representative believed, London, by this time, having been summoned to a country theatre, in which he had some interest, upon pressing business.

"And when was he expected back?"

'Twas difficult to say. Perhaps he might return in a few days; perhaps in a week or two. I bent my steps to the Temple; on the way, engaged places in a stage (my gratitude to thee, oh Magazine-man!) for Bessy and myself, next morning; spent all that day with her; and

arrived here, at home, with her the following evening; resolved to—let me see—ay, resolved to write a novel, and try whether the public would treat me better than its drunken favourite, who, as a play-maker, kept me from even appealing to its judgment.

And that is how they are getting out "Harold," Graves.

Bessy? Not a syllable have I spoken to her; that is, on the subject discussed between me and her old school-mistress. Not a breath. And, since that day, very little on indifferent subjects either.

The determination upon which I have acted, and which I formed before the old lady and I had done speaking, was this;—to enter into no explanation with her; to provoke no opportunity that would provoke *me:* to keep myself from the present proofs—the *proofs* of the tissue of falsehoods she has uttered to me; to keep myself from the proofs, if indeed they exist, of her shame and my destruction; to do all this—but to watch her; to watch her with a careless eye, and while she thinks I sleep; to watch her—and *him:*—to watch, and watch, and watch, *till I can once catch them together.* That was the determination I formed, and upon which I have acted, and upon which I do act, and upon which I will act.

As yet, I am sure he has neither come near the house, nor sent a message, since our return from town. Ay, I am *sure* of both these things, although Lucy Peat is still her attendant. I said I would watch.

But, although my lips are mute to Bessy, she must perceive the change—the estrangement in my manner—(do I begin to hate—loathe her!)—and how does she take it?

I cannot answer. She quite puts me out. My little Bessy, whom I thought so simple, and childish, and transparent! Does she resent or return my reserve? No. Does she wilily try to coax me out of it? No. But I am quite sure she thinks and ponders as much as I do, and

has her own plans, as I have mine. Counter-plans? underminings? Again I reply I do not know.

That her love for me remains, I believe. Her words and voice are always gentle and affectionate to me; and I often detect her gazing with a smile, though perhaps with a tear too, at my face, when we sit at table with our father. (He grows feebler every day, Graves.) She flies, like a fairy, to meet my slightest wish: and to-day, as I thanked her, in a kind voice, in spite of myself, for some little service, sweetly and gracefully done, she murmured in pleasure, and snatched my hand, and kissed it.

And that had not happened between us since our journey from London, now a month ago. Upon that occasion, I repulsed some of her little caresses, and so there ensued a grave civility on both sides. We were alone in the stage; other passengers had got down on the road. I sat silently and sadly, opposite to her, looking out at the window. I had been watching her for some outward evidence, in manner, in eye, or in speech, of a thoroughly changed heart and nature, in consequence of her late secret adventures in town; but I could detect nothing of what I sought for; nothing decisive, at least, to my mind;—there was only a new manner, now and then, upon her; and her brow was only changed to thought—nay, I believed, to placid thought! and although she sighed often, her sighs were sighs of pleasure (and I could not bring myself to add, guilty pleasure)—nay—after hearing me declare, in answer to her enquiries, that "Harold" would not be produced, and could therefore yield me no money—she smiled up into my face, and changed her place to sit close beside me. I was puzzled, just as I have been since, and still am, at her conduct. I averted my eyes, and became more engaged than ever with the landscape abroad. It was then she gently bowed her head to my hand: and it was then I repulsed her.

Half a volume of my novel done.

But Lucy Peat still in the house, because neither my Magazine patron, nor the quarter's interest of my father's money in the London bank, has done more than half pay the irremediable debts we have been contracting — and our debt to her, among the number. But I do not much fear the girl, now. Not since I made up my mind to observe her. Besides, I have just heard, by chance, that my young and gallant half-cousin has been for some time on the Continent, at his father's instance.

And, by the way, I may also mention here, that Lord Lintern's elder son, whom I had seen in such a high state of excitement at his father's house, the day I called there to complain of the worthy Mr. Wiggins, is a madman: that, upon that occasion, he had broken loose from his keepers; afterwards escaped quite beyond their control; and has been recaptured and conveyed back to a place of strong confinement, outside the paternal roof, within the last two months, or rather three or four weeks ago. And all this is deemed a secret in the village, and yet I have heard it.

More than four months now spent upon my novel, Graves, and it is half done, and I like it.

But, until it produce something (if it is ever to do so) — comforts not increasing around us.

For example. Our paltry "ready-furnished house" given up, *as too expensive!* and we living in lodgings of a very, very humble description. Bessy and I but poorly clothed — ay, and fed, in order to keep our father (who still grows worse and worse) supplied with something like generous viands, and a mouthful of wine — poached, smuggled — had in any way — ay, father, in any way!

But, surely, I say to myself, it cannot long be thus. And so, I spin on my pages and pages, and am philosophical

—am I not? But my heart draws comfort from another and a higher source, too. In a passing moment of refined, raw agony, the other day, such as the bravest of us cannot help, and which perhaps are sent for our good, I flung myself on my knees in my bed-room, burying my face in the bed-covering. It began to be despair with me—it ended in hope. I do not know how—am not conscious of the process of association—but, suddenly, I had an idea that the Almighty God was looking down upon me, from his mysterious throne in Heaven, waiting for me to pray. And I did pray, to the clouded majesty of His tremendous face, and got up from my knees, able to sit down and work.

And very often since, in the middle of the noon day, as well as morning and evening, I pour my trembling confidence into his mighty bosom.

Oh, blessed, thrice blessed be the night when you and I first turned our minds from the flimsy and flippant scepticism of half-informed boyhood to a search after the proofs of truth, dear Graves!

My love for my poor Bessy returns in all its force. I am sure she has not lately made as free as formerly with Lucy Peat — (who even still is our servant, for reasons previously given). And I say to myself, perhaps my sister saw that tall and stupid coxcomb, upon those occasions, in town, only to bid him farewell, in consequence of our memorable conversation together.

Yet, Bessy continues to embarrass me. I do not indeed wonder to see her look ill, — pale-faced, and heavy-eyed — and neglect her person: — for, to say nothing of her feelings for our situation, the child — (child she almost is) — really goes without good food, and her wardrobe presents few temptations for personal display—and this I have before said — (by the way, the reason why we are able to induce our sick father to partake of better things than fall to our own lot, is because he is now quite confined to his

bedchamber, and we can take our meals without his observation).

Nor does Bessy's profound and unwearied depression of spirits surprise me, under these circumstances. Sometimes, however, I detect in her evidences of a passionate and poignant sorrow, which make me think she has her own private causes for misery, apart from our common lot of suffering. I saw her, through the little glass-door of our uncarpeted sitting-room, the other day, kneeling, wringing her hands, and weeping, as if under the pressure of a sudden recurrence of a great fear. Nay, I remember, that about a fortnight after our return from town, the tranquillity and self-content in which, as I have mentioned, she gained home with me, suddenly gave way, even before the last wretched change took place in our circumstances; and as if for some reason known only to herself. A person surprised with the tidings of the unhappy and irremediable termination of circumstances, upon which a bright and an only hope had been built, might, I suspected, have been agitated similarly. But surely I only torture appearances into a delusive form. And, indeed, what can I conjecture of sufficient power, really to influence her, as my fancy now and then will have her influenced?

Lest you should say, dear Graves, that I have given up all local sketching for you, I pen down the following, particularly as I have contrived, with my usual good luck, to figure as an actor in the scene; and more—made an enemy of an influential parish man, in a high-flying attempt to play the philanthropist. Heaven knows how the latter occurrence may yet influence my fortune!

Call to mind the melancholy and curiously-habited and appointed beadle of our parish, of whom I have made slight mention, when describing the riot outside the Anchor inn.

Before that night, I had often encountered him taking his rounds in search of intruding vagrants, gipsies, and

sturdy beggars, from other regions, who have not the least right on earth to pass the bounds of his dominion, and who were to be driven into outer darkness, at the point of his staff of office, the moment they should fall in his way. Of mornings, particularly, I used to meet him, during my own solitary walk in chase of the vagrants of my own imagination, sometimes on the cliff, sometimes on the inland paths of our parish. From the first, he had attracted my observation, my interest, nay, my compassion. He is rather a young man; but his sallow features seem dragged into untimely rigidity, and his brow seems overloaded with care, in the morning of its day, in consequence of the arduous and increasing duties of his office. He walks slowly along, or rather waddles slowly, his head ever bent to his chest, and a parish of responsibility (to him a world) hanging upon his protruded under lip. His hat is a thick, mighty one of coarse felt, three-cocked, according to the eldest and most ponderous fashion, and smeared with brass-thread lace very deep, and very much tarnished. From his throat to his toes he wears a dark-blue frieze gaberdine, all of one shape in the back, double-caped, cuffed and collared with red, and also made superfluously heavy with faded brass-thread lace. And in his right hand, swinging at his side, and caught in the middle, so as to be well-balanced, he carries, for ever and ever, what I believe I have called a very curious insignia of his power. It is a short thick stick, painted different colours, but all lively ones, with massive pewter rings, as if of silver, and terminating in a considerable mass of — I believe, block tin, fretted and stamped — to say nothing of bulged and battered — into some exceedingly fine thing, typical of what neither he nor I know much about. You observe, I am rather cautious of even the material of this awful mace; but the fault is not mine. I have more than once endeavoured to make it out, first as I passed him on his walks, next as we strolled on, discoursing gravely, side by side together; but I could not. Once I even requested him to let me touch it; but, although we had been good friends for some time, — no, no; that was not a thing to be done.

Yes: I had resolved to make his acquaintance, and good friends we soon became. From meeting, very often, out in the lonesomest places, this was not difficult. At perhaps our sixth rencontre, he accompanied his usual care-fraught sigh, while passing me, with a pull at his cocked hat, on the part of his left hand. With much satisfaction I returned his overtures, asked him a question, and, every day since, I think we have longed, like two lovers, that happy fortune might throw us in each other's way once in the twenty-four hours at least.

I listened attentively and sympathisingly to his accounts of the hard lot to which it had been the will of Providence to doom a parish beadle; to his explanation of the multiplied responsibilities of the office; to his illustrations of those duties, separately; and to his modest, though oft-repeated opinion, that from no public functionary do mankind receive more benefit, while none are by them so scantily rewarded. He protested, that it would require a man endowed with the bodily strength and moral courage of ten men, and covered with as many eyes, before and behind, as are displayed in a peacock's tail, to go through his work well — he who had only man's ordinary strength, and only two eyes in his head. Did people think that a matter of six or seven tall gipsies, male and female, never turned on a poor beadle, and he alone with them on a lonesome path, trying to hunt them into the next parish? And though a man was a man, and boys were boys, suppose ten or twenty young uns caught by him robbing a garden or an orchard, did it stand to reason that he could always beat them off, or drag five or six of them to the cage, single-handed? And how could he see, across many inequalities of land, and more than a mile off, what vagrants might be getting into the parish at one side, while he was routing out others at a different side? And, above all, how could he exactly take notice, among all the young girls of our parish, who was and who was not likely to bring a burden on us — although this duty he was expected most perfectly to perform, in order "that the girl might be had before the magistrate, and an order made on the proper father, in time?"

To all this reasoning I invariably answered in the way he preferred, and our friendship grew and strengthened, day after day.

The other morning I met him on the road leading from the sea to our inland hamlet. He was issuing through the low doorway of a very humble thatched cottage, and the marks of recent trouble were fresh upon his brow. I joined him in his official walk, and the cause of his agitation was soon made known to me, and with the more readiness, as it proved to be an instance of a new species of inconvenience to which he was constantly subjected.

The inhabitant of the cottage, or, indeed, hovel, was an old man, a pauper, bed-ridden, and unable to do any kind of work; and he fancied that the allowance made to him was not ample enough, though, in truth, it was full as much as young men of thirty, fit for labour of every description, received; and he was continually complaining, and more than that; and he, the beadle, could never pass his door, no matter how pressing his business, that the old pauper did not scream out to him from his bed, and almost always force him to enter the house, his cries were so violent and "hobstropris;" and then, it was nothing but ask, ask, to have his case brought before the committee, and curse, curse, when he was refused.

My beadle fell some steps in my love. I began to question, at least, the soundness of his reasoning powers: for it struck me, that instead of having from the parish only quite as much as a young, strong man of thirty, the screaming old cripple ought to have a great deal more. I turned back to the hovel, and entered it.

The moment the old man saw me, he began to criticise, in no studied phrase, the conduct of the gentlemen of the committee — of whom he chose to suppose me one — of the overseer, and even of the beadle. He represented himself as a native of the parish, born and bred; as an industrious labourer, who, for his whole life, until he became bed-ridden, had never troubled it for relief; and now his rage was high against all those who dealt him out his weekly pittance: and with the poor man's scorn and impatience of such assistance, even while he is compelled

to accept it, he did not hesitate to imprecate on the subject, and insist on "his right" to more liberal treatment.

Endeavouring to persuade him to qualify his speech and temper, I asked the amount of his allowance; it was three and sixpence: I certainly concluded, in my own mind, that, even comparatively speaking, as my beadle had put the case, it ought to be increased; and, although I made him no promise, I resolved to go myself to the committee, and intercede for him — a wise resolve, you will say, for a casual resident in the parish; and one not overburdened himself, by the way, with the only thing which is sure to influence such a body on such occasions — money.

Learning that the committee sat that same day, away to their room in the workhouse I went, however; or rather, to their room attached to the workhouse. They held their councils, in fact, in what had been the barn of the main building when it had been a farm-house, many years ago: and I found, after gaining their presence, that upon all the days when they left it unoccupied, the place was filled by spinners and wool-pickers — some of the paupers resident in the asylum for the unfortunates of the parish; which fact became evident from the rows of spinning-wheels, and other implements of compulsory industry, pushed back and arranged against the walls.

My good friend, the beadle, stood at the door of the committee-room, zealously engaged in keeping at their proper distance a crowd of applicants for relief. Recognising me, he touched his cocked-hat, and immediately invited me to enter and take a seat; adding, however, that I should have to wait for my turn to address the committee, until after three or four persons, whose names had been announced in the order of their coming, should be heard and disposed of. I thanked him, and went in.

The individual preferring a claim at the moment of my entry, was Mrs. Brown, our first landlady, at the sea-houses. She stood at the end of a long deal table, confronting the committee and their chairman, who occupied its other end. All her children, I believe, were at her side, or behind her, except her youngest, an infant, which

she carried in her arms. The poor woman, at all times since I had met her, nervous to a great degree, now shook in every limb, her face was ashy pale, her colourless and feverish lips quivered, and tears ran down her cheeks, interrupting her feeble and self-doubting words.

"Oh, dear gentlemen," thus she ended her statement, as I came in, evidently as much in awe and dread of the farmers she addressed, as if they had been the twelve judges; "and it is not to complain of Mas'r Brown I be here, nor to make you angry with him; I 've never said a bitter word of him in my life, and won't begin now; and if the littleuns and myself had not been turned out of our house, yesterday — if we had a roof to try to earn our bread under, the parish would never be troubled with us; and as for him, maybe it bayn't his fault; and I be sure if he had money to bring home with him, he would come back to us; wouldn't he, Fred, my king?" she continued, stooping to kiss a little fellow of three or four — "you were always his pet, and you know he would."

"Ah, but, Missis," said one of her hearers, "I tell you Will Brown be living, this moment, in Hastings, in full work, with Harriet Stone to keep house for him — and when I say that, I know what I say; — I be overseer of this parish, and don't say things without sure grounds; and I tell you, moreover, that the day we can lay hands on him, he shall support his wife and his children, or go a-treading."

"Oh, Mr. White, I be sure you always take care to get the best information; but indeed, sir, some one has wronged Mas'r Brown to you, this time; indeed, indeed, some one has!" and the faithful and meek creature wept loudly.

"Well, Missis, we shall see; for the present, you have heard what the gentlemen say to you; here be the work'us open to you and your little ones, great and little, if you choose to come in, and try your hand with them at whatever employment we can give you; if you do not, four shillings a week is the outside of what can be allowed to you and them."

The poor petitioner sighed as if her heart would break, looked at her children, and then on the ground, before she replied.

"As I'm a living born woman, standing here before you, gentlemen, 'tisn't a dislike to work as hard as you can wish us, that makes me unwilling to come into the house: no; but 'tis ———"

"Oh, the shame, to be sure," interrupted the overseer; "we all know that."

"It is, then — but more for their sakes — and for their father's sake, than for my own — oh, what would he say to me if I consented to give up *his* children without another struggle, at any rate!"

"Well, well; all's said that can be said; good day, Missis. — Beadle, send in Alice French."

Mrs. Brown courtesied to the floor, and again sighing piteously, withdrew, followed by her children.

The last of the train were pushed aside, as was also the officiating beadle himself, by the claimant who now entered — Alice French.

She was an elderly woman of considerable stature, bulky, red-armed, red-faced, very broad at the hips, and looking as strong as a horse, and as cross — as constitutionally cross — as a thing she little resembled otherwise — namely, a bilious Nabob. She carried a tin milk-can in her hand, half full of milk; and after hurrying across the floor, in a kind of striding waddle, this she slapt down on the table so smartly that the milk spattered out at the sides of the lid as she began —

"So, now for it, over again, gentlemen."

"Ay, now for it, over again, dame," laughed a young and good-humoured looking farmer.

"Don't 'dame' me, Mas'r Gaddidge, and I often told you as much afore now: my name be Alice French — or, if you like to be civil, Miss's French — what no one refused to call me as long as my husband was alive."

"Well, Miss's French, and what's your business with us to-day?"

"And don't *you* know?" counter-queried Alice; "it

would be time if you did, however; my business be to get my shilling a-week, to help pay my rent, since you will do no more for a poor, sickly widow, like me."

"Tut, tut, dame, that's an old story," said the overseer, "and you have had your answer, long ago."

"Mas'r White," resumed the claimant, frowning wickedly at him; "don't you go for to be wapsy with me, what you always be; I wun't be called dame, I tell you, by you, or any of your committee, either; pay me my shilling a-week, and that be all what's between us."

"Why, Missis," said young Gaddidge, winking at the overseer to be silent, "we cannot possibly think you stand in need of any assistance from the parish;" obviously he enjoyed the character and the periodical visits of the always repulsed, but never daunted Alice.

"Then I be a story-teller, be I?" — she demanded, chopping her logic very short.

"I haven't said so, but your hands are always full of work, and you get well paid for it."

"What work, Mas'r Gaddidge?" — It is to observed, that in her wrath against the committee, she would not concede to one of them the "Mr." which might tacitly acknowledge their claims to be called — what they called themselves — gentlemen. "What work, Mas'r?"

"Why, first of all, look at your tin, there."

"Eighteen-pence a week for serving milk to all my sister's customers, morning and evening, every day in the week!" ejaculated Mrs. French, "and that be what you call being well paid?"

"But your mangle isn't often idle," observed the overseer.

"My mangle? — maybe you sit on your heels outside my window, to watch when I be turning of it, Mas'r White? My mangle! farthing a piece for babies' caps, the few that I get to do of un."

"You never leave a great folk's kitchen, in the parish, till you worry the servants out of a load of things — halves of turkeys and fowls, slices of bacon, and all such like," remonstrated another of the committee, who had taken up Gaddidge's vein of humour.

"And sells un to her sister, and other neighbours, when she gets home," added a third.

"From a penny to threepence a scrap! from a penny to threepence! I be blowed, gentlemen, if I ever makes more on 'em, and that not oftener than once a fortnight!" This last was a home-thrust, because a new one, which alarmed Alice's conscience a little, and disarmed her of her defiance for a moment.

"To say nothing of a shilling a month, sacrament-money, from Dr. Bailey," continued young Gaddidge.

"Well, and don't I earn it? if that mere nothing be a thing to aggravate on; don't I earn it?"

"How so?" asked her chief tormentor.

"How so?—what do you call walking a good two miles of ground, up hill, once a month, for a woman of my years, and so stout and so weakly as I be, at the same time? be that nothing, just to obleege him? And then, doesn't he get his full shilling's worth out of me, after church be over, making company o' me, in his parlour, to hear me tell 'fore right to his face, all the news I can pick up for him, in the parish, high and low, since the last past monthly Sunday?"

Here was a general laugh at this announcement of the good rector's innocent love of parish gossip: Alice did not join, however, in the mirth around her; on the contrary, her ever severe brow grew more severe, as she again demanded her shilling a week, "to help pay her rent."

"Nonsense, woman; you get no shilling here, and you've often been told so: go about your business, and earn it yourself, what you are well able to do," said the overseer; "I be overseer of this parish, and bound to know who are entitled, and who are not; and when I say so, I go on sure grounds."

She had been preparing for a vast burst of recrimination, while he spoke: he had scarce ended, when the first gust of the storm arose; but he cut her short, calling out to the beadle to remove her. "Remove me!" echoed Alice; "I should like to see him try, if *I* liked stop here; or you either, Mas'r White; but I be going of my own accord." She snatched up her tin, turned her back ab-

ruptly on them, waddled to the door, stopped inside its threshold, and added, "I be going; but I'll come back among you, ay, every committee-day till I have that shilling, or know for why; the poor, the industrious poor of this parish be robbed, I be blowed if they bayn't!"

"No such words as those to the gentlemen, dame, or you shall trudge to the tread-mill," cried the overseer.

"Tread-mill, and 'dame,' over again;—and *gentlemen!*—*That* for your *gentlemen!*"—and ere she finally disappeared, Alice spat shortly on the floor, and scraped her foot quickly, twice or thrice, her side turned to the committee.

"John Simmons," called the overseer, the moment she had withdrawn: and John Simmons strode in, his hands thrust into the pockets of his wide, fishermen's trousers, and his heavy-featured face poking downward.

"All we can say to you, Simmons, is this; if things go on so badly as you tell us, come into the house at once, and so assist your family."

The man shuffled on his outspread legs, shook his head, and was silent.

"Then there's only one other thing; turn convict," (meaning, I know not by what latitude of speech, that John Simmons was to draw sand and boulders from the beach, in a little cart, to mend the roads and pathways.)

"And what am I to get for turning convic'—for turning myself into a beast of burden?" demanded the applicant, without looking up.

"Four shillings a week."

"Then I be blowed if I do, gentlemen," he resumed; "four shillings a week for slaving twelve hours a day!—No. Better starve till the fishing comes round again. This be the second time I was offered your four shillings; and the first time I troubled you, years ago, was after all *honest* trades failed—remember that—" and he strode out.

A wretched-looking wayfarer, an "operative" of some kind, I concluded, now entered, supporting his wife, who was large with child, and so feeble, if not so pained, as to be unable to walk unassisted. The husband looked from

her to the committee with a miserable face of distress and supplication.

"Nothing to be done but what I've already told you," said the overseer to him; "get to your parish, you and she, as fast as possible: our cart is at your service: so go along, and lose no time."

"Our parish is upwards of eighty miles off," urged the man, "and you see her condition."

"We cannot help that; we have not removed you from your parish, nor your parish from you; and we can do no more than the duty laid down for us."

"And she *is* to be carted off in this state?" asked the husband, his meagre and hitherto humble face now darkening to indignation.

"She *must;* we cannot run the risk of a strange woman and child becoming burdensome to us; we've enough of our own to provide for. So, make the best of your time, I advise you; the constable has the cart ready for you."

"Come, then, Mary," said the man, "and if this be parish law, the great, and the rich, and the wise, who have framed it for us, ought to sit in parish committee-rooms oftener than they do, to see it put in force—that's all I say."

After he had assisted his wife through the door, no one immediately entered, and so, deeming myself at liberty to prefer *my* petition, I approached to the table, and stated it in a few words.

It was met with general indifference, if not contempt. But the overseer treated it, and indeed me, with peculiar bluntness. He ridiculed the complaints of my old client, and also the idle interference of people who really could have no sufficient opportunity of forming opinions on such subjects; none, at least, equal to those enjoyed by the overseer of that parish, who "when he said so, went on sure grounds."

I replied, superfluously, no doubt, for the words and manner of the parish tyrant, and his glances at my indifferent attire, *did* work me, as usual. He retorted in a

tone of distinct insolence. He reminded me again that he was overseer of that parish, and, more than that, an independent man; an independent man, who did not care a crooked rush about any other man, rich or poor, in England; and a man *who paid as he went;* (and here he spoke expressively,) and one who *when he fared on game* of any kind, shot it with his own gun, and his dogs at his side, and his licence in his pocket; and one who paid the King's duty on *all the wines he drank;* and he wondered at a stranger in a parish interfering in the business of a parish; at least when such a stranger was not one of the greatest and richest folk we had in the country, far and near.

I am angry, very angry with myself, dear Graves, for the manner in which I resented the fellow's attempt to insult me. However, I did utter language which made him red in the face, and brought him swaggering and bullying up to my nose, and at last obtained me the peremptory order of the whole committee, along with him, to leave the barn. "Look to your own concerns at home, Mister," were the last words the overseer muttered into my ear as I left him; "they'll find you parish work enough, may be;" and I concluded that he alluded again to my buying poached game and smuggled wines of Sam Geeson, the apprentice, however he had come by his knowledge.

—Could he have meant any thing else?

But I had not yet done with him for that day.

I took a long ramble to allow my chagrin to evaporate; and returning homeward, in the dusk of the evening, encountered a crowd of people flinging stones at the windows of a house outside the hamlet. Upon enquiry, I learned that it was *his* house, and that the people were paupers, discontented with his parish proceedings, and thus expressing their good-will. They groaned for him, and, in no measured terms, accused him of wronging the poor: and they quoted, as an instance of his hard-heartedness, the fact of his having that day sent the poor woman in the cart to—or rather towards—her remote parish. They did not fail to couple with their animadversions, abuse of parish laws as well as parish officers—but here I digress a moment to

give you a striking instance of how the very system they were inveighing against had curdled the charity of their own hearts.

I had scarce joined their outskirts when a very miserable creature, who had lately been turned out of an hospital, in a near town, after the amputation of one of his legs, dragged himself on his crutches to my side, and sat down on the pathway. I questioned him. He gave me the information I have given you, adding, that his remnant of a leg had begun to get inflamed; that he feared he could not hobble much farther homeward without going into some other hospital. I put my hand into my pocket in search of a penny. Some half-dozen of the rioters were within hearing of our conversation, and now witnessing my alms-giving preparations, and feeling jealous, no doubt, of an interloper, according to law, cried out, "Don't, sir, don't—help your own poor—let him go to his parish."

"But he can't go," I remarked; "look," and I pointed to his stump, to his glassy eyes, and to the perspiration which teemed from his forehead.

"Oh, that be all nons'ns—let him go to his parish," was their reply, as they turned to groan anew at the overseer.

I own I did not at first speak a word to induce them to act more peaceably. But when Mr. White, throwing up a window, informed them that he had sent for the constables, and that they were beasts and savages to attack his house, *and his daughter, to their knowledge, nearly breathing her last,* my feelings suddenly changed, and I went among them, and used what oratory I could.

Again, however, my mind changed towards the overseer; and, I think, for sufficient reasons.

"And I see *you*, too, Mister," he cried out, addressing himself to me; "*you*, Mr. Mutford, I mean—and I have seen you, some minutes back, encouraging these people to a breach of the peace—yes, sir—and I'll not forget it to you, no more than your language to-day in the committee room."

I walked rapidly out of the crowd, without condescending to reply, and left them to do as they pleased. And what

they *did* please to do, Graves, as I have been informed, I add with melancholy disgust against the state of the parish legislation, which could have provoked them so to disgrace human nature. Poor White's only daughter (do I not forgive the man now?) *was* ill, *was* dying; and they knew it, as he had said; and that night she died; and, some hours after the sad event, the debased beings re-assembled before his house, and lighted a bonfire, and let off squibs and crackers. I state a wretched fact, upon undoubted authority.

But here you have an account of the parish great man whose enmity I have aroused, as well as a detail of the circumstances which brought me into contact with him.

After all, Graves, the power of suffering, — or rather, the talent of enduring what we call affliction, is to be gained, like every other talent, by practice. That, at least, is the faith in which I will die. What do I particularly mean now? I proceed to inform you; requesting you to remark that I have not been so quiescent this long while as I feel to-day.

First, learn, that the intimacy between us and your brother has been in a great measure broken up since some days before I went to London with Bessy: and now I may mention why, although I have hitherto passed the subject.

The why is easily and shortly stated, — your brother did Bessy the high and unexpected honour of proposing for her, and she rejected him. And, upon that, he told me he would discontinue his visits at our humble abode, for the purpose of reconciling his mind to the disappointment. Meantime, I might call on him, whenever I should feel disposed to afford him so great a pleasure. I did not go at all, however; giving as a reason to my own inconsistent breast, that the less he saw of any of us, the sooner and the more effectually could he accomplish his purpose of forgetting.

We have since met, accidentally, notwithstanding, and

chatted together as cordially as ever (shall I own the truth? I was and am glad that he has kept away from us of late — I should not like to have received him in our new lodgings). And this morning, before breakfast, we encountered each other again, at the sea-side. He was on his way to the circulating library, (which, according to poor old Moffit, confers its title on "the Parade,") to look over the newspapers. We gossiped a moment, walking up to the door of the manifold establishment. He asked me to step in with him; I demurred, stating that I was not a subscriber to the news-room. That was nothing, he said; I could sit down and wait for him just half a minute, while he skimmed over one paper only. I did as he wished, placing myself at the table, so as to convince the proprietor and his showy daughters that I had no plan of gleaning a line of news, surreptitiously, over the shoulders of any of their entitled visiters; one line of one of the papers, however, did meet my eye, owing to the fidgets of the old gentleman who perused the "folio of four pages," and who *would* thrust under my nose now one corner, now another of it. And that line completed an announcement of the failure of the bankers in whose hands my father had placed his little — and his last — earthly property. So that, Graves, we are now literally beggars, my man; or, indeed, some degrees below that respectable class of men and women, inasmuch as we owe money, and have none.

What think you of my opening proposition of this morning?

I have just returned from my father's bedchamber, after breaking to him, as gently as I could, the agreeable tidings. He fainted on his pillow; Bessy and I succeeded in restoring him, and I now go out for his medical attendant — that is to say, the village apothecary.

I resume, after a lapse of twenty-four hours, to put something in the journal, which perhaps explains more fully than I have previously ventured to do, the advice of the overseer to "look after my own affairs, at home."

You may decide, as you think fit, whether the determination to write a long and conquering chapter of my novel was the sole thing that kept me out of bed, last night; I only say that I sat in my room, writing hard. At about two o'clock this morning, after returning from administering a draught to my father—(concerning whom our Galen shakes his head, by the way,) my high imaginings were interrupted by, methought, a gentle tapping at the little kitchen window under me. I stepped out, softly, to the lobby, and distinctly heard the signal repeated. Presently, Lucy Peat (whose nightly couch is prepared in the kitchen) unfastened the window, and, I concluded, passed into our back yard. From a favourable peep-hole at the rear of the cottage, I continued my observations; Lucy certainly appeared in the sharp, wintry moon-light, stealthily walking beside a man of great bulk, as well as unusual height, who, though I saw only his back, I was convinced at a glance, could not be—Sam Geeson.

This discovery made me over-curious, and I unwisely resolved to see the face of the new lover, as well as to catch a few of his words, if possible. The pair stopped in the shadow of a frail shed, in the garden, or, indeed, yard, which I knew could be gained by issuing through our front door into the street or road, doubling down that road, and then entering the rear of our premises by an open gateway; and accordingly, in a few seconds, nothing but a screen of chinky planks divided me from my "minions of the moon."

Using the utmost precaution, I applied my eye to a crack, and its retina was directly painted with the inverted image of the face and person of Mas'r Fox's earthly idol, Mr. Boakes. There was no mistaking him for an instant; he fronted me, and a treacherous ray of the planet of frail vows struck vividly upon his memorable features. He was earnestly impressing Lucy Peat with the necessity, the worthiness, and the moral beauty of laying his second child, of which I now understand she was pregnant, at the door of the same individual with whom she had complimented his first—namely, Samuel Geeson; and thus he, Mr. Boakes, would be saved from the short-sighted and

unjustified misconstructions of the world, as well as from the fire-side remarks of Mrs. Boakes — whose health, by the way, still grew worse, he said, and thus, also, she, Lucy, would be saved from much public persecution, and, perhaps, flax-spinning, or wool-picking, fourteen hours a day in the workhouse; and, to support poor Lucy in his long-formed resolutions to adopt this course, the stout gallant handed unto her the bank notes which she had demanded of him, and which, he remarked, she need not have used so much threat to obtain; and his exhortation ended by reminding Lucy that, so soon as Samuel Geeson should wed her, in consequence of his supposed two children entitling him to a claim on the parish, then would arise an opportunity——

"I be jiggered if there do, tho', Mas'r Boakes," here interrupted a voice from the deep darkness in a remote corner of the shed in which I stood. Boakes instantly pressed down his hat into his eyes, pulled up the collar of his great coat, and disappeared in one direction, and Lucy Peat, with the fleetness and dexterity of a cat, startled in a similar scene, flew to her back-window, and clambered through it.

"Sam Geeson?" I demanded, speaking cautiously towards the dark corner. I was answered with a happy laugh, and an admission of identity. And then, drawing close to me, the apprentice congratulated himself, heartily, upon the conversation we had both overheard; adding, that all along he had suspected his betrothed Lucy, but, until the present hour, never could come by the necessary proof; to-night, however, after watching and "managing on the sly" a good while, he had been successful; and again he wished himself joy at being freed of a wife, and another man's two children, in the dawning of his youth.

"It be an escape, sir, bayn't it?" asked Sam, "and we only waiting, as Boakes hisself said, for the second young un, to marry, and have a little help from the parish? I be blowed, Mr. Mutford, but what you must have the next hare and bottle gratis for this, and for the good luck of being here, so near me, too."

I asked him, in a disagreeable omen, to explain the lat-

ter part of his speech; but he jocosely (that is, in his way), evaded my question, and, wishing me a "good night," hurried from the outhouse.

And so ended my little nocturnal adventure, which I report for you, Graves, the very first thing this morning. Now a gulp of fresh air, out by the sea: the want of sleep, if nothing else, makes me heavy.

Nine o'clock, forenoon.

The occurrences of last night, dear Graves, involved me —*us*—in very annoying consequences, as I had half anticipated; nay, to a greater extent than I could have feared. ——

God send that I see to the end of them! ——

When I came back from my ramble I found our house in the utmost confusion. My friend, the beadle, whispering with groups of people, was at the door, and loud voices sounded above stairs. I gained the little sitting-room outside my father's bedchamber. Lucy Peat sat sulky and sobbing on a chair; Mr. White, the overseer, stood at my father's door, speaking in to him in his bed; and my sister Bessy, trembling and weeping too, appeared inside its threshold, vainly urging the man of power to withdraw.

"I have nothing—can have nothing to do with the shameful matter, but to tell you—to command you to take the vile girl out of this house directly, Mr. Overseer," said my poor father, his faint and broken voice raised to — beyond—its utmost natural pitch.

"Be a little more merciful to me, master, or you may be sorry you were not," muttered Lucy.

"And never, never let her see the face of my child again, sir," continued my father; "never, I mean, never let her come into our presence again."

"Pho, now," scoffed Lucy, checking her sobs, "is that to be it, Miss Bessy?—you'll make favour for me, won't you, Miss?"

So far I had witnessed the scene without interfering. Indignation, as well as astonishment, kept me silent and

motionless. Now I advanced to Mr. White, and desired him, whatever might be his business, to withdraw in my company from my father's door, and explain it to me. Perhaps I mixed up with my request some words that served to add to the man's former bitterness against me; for he retorted upon me in a loud and brawling voice, and it was not till my commands arose into distinct threats of putting a pistol to his head, I believe, that he consented to go down stairs, taking Lucy Peat carefully with him.

In the little hall, he gave me to understand that in consequence of my maid (maid!) servant having neglected a civil intimation from him to affiliate the child of which she was at present pregnant, he had come, with the beadle, to compel her attendance before the magistrate. "We shall want *your* attendance, also, on the occasion, sir, at one o'clock, to-day," he added.

"Me? what can I have to do with the subject?"

"The man against whom she has expressed her intention to make the charge, summonses you as a witness in his favour," sneered the overseer. "Beadle, hand Mr. Mutford the summons." And my beadle accordingly stepped forward, and gave me the paper.

"Well," I said, "I must obey, I suppose; and so, your business being ended, you will please to leave this house, instantly, and with as little noise as possible; your vulgar brawling in it has already gone too far."

"Vulgar? — what a pity in such a nice, genteel house! I fear we spoiled the Turkey-carpet, up stairs:—come, Lucy," sneered the overseer.

"I be a-coming," answered Lucy, sullenly and pertly— "Mr. Michael, a word with you, first."

Before I could withdraw, or otherwise avoid her, the girl came close to me, and asked in a whisper, "Be you for upholding Sam Geeson, sir, in fore-right earnest?"

"I must speak the truth," I answered.

"Don't, though, Mr. Michael," she resumed, fixing her eyes on me, and nodding.

"And how durst you offer me such an advice?" I said, loudly.

"I durst and I dare nothing, sir; I only say again, don't — and you understand me well enough."

"No — I can only understand that you are saucy and impertinent, as well as depraved, Lucy."

"Then you be a greater fool than I took you for, *if* you cannot guess my meaning, Mr. Michael; as to saucy — and depraved — because — come, come, sir, I tell you, a third time — don't."

"Take her away," I cried to the overseer — "do your duty here, and free me of this creature, and I will do my duty at the magistrate's."

"Well, then, only another word — and, on your life, listen to me!" — she continued to whisper — "say a tittle of what you saw and heard last night, and by my soul and body! I will pay you tit for tat!" — and she took the beadle's arm, and they all left the house.

I presume that Miss Lucy's tit-for-tat is to be an attempt, by hard swearing on her own part, as well as on the part of credible witnesses, that 'tis neither Sam Geeson nor Mr. Boakes, but *I*, and I only. We shall see. Her silly threat will not keep me from giving my honest aid to punish, as they merit, by exposure, herself and that blubber-headed hypocrite, Boakes. So, I leave you, Graves, to proceed to the magistrate, — ay, to stand again before his face, though I hate it. Remember that I shall stand before it for the first time *as* an object of hate ——

Hate? hate? I fear I am not as good a Christian as, a few weeks ago, I was. Well, I will kneel down before I set out. Farewell!

—— * By the Omnipotent! By hell, heaven, and the putrid earth! — oh, mercy, mercy, God! — lay it not upon me so very, very heavy! — Graves! Graves! only friend! Oh, I wish I could weep! — you will see drops upon this paper — but not tears — they fall from my bitten lips! — Graves! — no, no, I cannot! —

* * * *

— And yet — from my prostrate, grovelling agony upon

* These are the last words Mutford ever wrote in his Journal; they must have escaped his pen, almost unconsciously, immediately after he ran home from the magistrate's.

the floor, again I bound up to —— Graves! in the outrageous, fireside-blasting, and heart-tearing operation of *that law*, I have been doomed to be accurst from eternity! —and in every relation of life!—in all belonging to me, as well as in myself!——

"—Ay, scream, there, within his chamber, Bessy, my little sister!—in the chamber that *was* his!—scream! scream! scream! I like that key of your voice!—it soothes my brain, as dulcet music!—and it will not disturb *him!*—scream!—Graves, she lies screaming on his dead and stiff body!—But that is little! (I live to say it) she who does so—my only sister—now my only living kin—is—is—

"Ha, ha, Graves!—her confidant *has* paid me tit-for-tat!—punctually and fully paid me. Before Lintern's face, too, and he to strike a balance between us! and before my overseer and my beadle; before the world, yea, there, and so, she has paid me!

"Ha, ha! old fellow! Graves!—within the last hour I have seen her, my sister Bessy, I mean, brought—dragged, into his magisterial room, upon an accusation which she denied not—Ay! I was right, all along—ay, it needed not even the school-mistress to give me suspicions and fears—although I suppressed them—flung them down—stamped them down,—or I thought I had.

"Ay!—and this *was* their concerted plan of vengeance, of extermination, upon us! and has it not worked well? Has it not?

"Its immediate perpetrator sent out of my reach, too! to the Continent—all the way!—That, also, was an admirable contrivance! As if I could not trace him! Pennyless though I be, as if I could not! as if I will not! Yea, without food or raiment! First, out of this, out of this with her! For we must, Graves, though I walk with *her* in my arms—Why?—reason good.

"Recollect the answer given to the man and woman in the Committee-room.

"IT IS NOT OUR PARISH!

"Again, Bessy, my gentle simple sister! again and again!

"But leave the corpse, now. The first thing we have to do is — to bury it."

Continuing in the third person, it will first be convenient to give some more satisfactory account of the proceedings at Lord Lintern's than that to be inferred from Mutford's allusions.

When Mutford gained the magistrate's presence, by appointment, at one o'clock, he found there before him the overseer, Lucy Peat, the beadle, and Sam Geeson. The enquiry had commenced; Lucy had made her declarations of the accountability of the young apprentice; and Sam had just entered upon his defence. Seeing Mutford, he continued; —

"As yet I've mentioned no names, your worship, waiting for my witness; here be he, now, and will just tell you who he saw and heard speaking with her last night, and what they said between 'em."

Lord Lintern — without a recognition passing between him and his late correspondent — called on Mutford to advance and speak. He did so, in a matter-of-course manner, as if he had never before seen or heard of his lordship. The moment he came in, Lucy Peat turned her head quickly, and fixed her eyes on his face. As he prepared to speak, she dropped sitting on a chair. He began his statement on oath, and she drew in her under-lip, looked down, shook her head slightly two or three times, and patted her foot on the carpet. He ended, and she rose up again, and asked, "And now you be done, Mr. Michael?"

Mutford replied that he had no more to say.

"Very well, sir. 'Tis enough, maybe. My turn next. But think of yourself, sir; try if there be nothing at all more, what you'd like to give out? Not a single word?"

He repeated his denial, and the magistrate authoritatively and sternly commanded her to proceed without delay in whatever attempt she was about to make to rebut his evidence.

"Do, Lucy," grinned Geeson.

"I will, your worship," she answered, nodding expressively towards Lord Lintern, and not condescending to take the least notice of her late admirer—"I will, and to your lordship's satisfaction, as well as to Mr. Michael Mutford's; you shall both be very glad for having put me upon my last defence; that I promise you; and I only ask a little time, just as much as it will take Mr. White, here, to trot his horse down to the village, and sure I won't be refused the favour? Mr. White, let me whisper a word in your ear before you go."

Suddenly conceding to herself her own request, she bent the overseer's head to her lips, and made him some brief communication. He started in great surprise; then, glancing at Mutford, a glow of gross gratification and triumph came over his features; and then he spoke to the magistrate.

"The girl says true, my Lord; it is quite necessary for me, in the discharge of my duty, to hasten directly to the village; I will be back in a very short time."

The magistrate assented. Mr. White, after another glance at Mutford, hurried out of the apartment, and the following instant was heard, not merely trotting, as Lucy had promised for him, but galloping hard down the avenue.

"Until his return," resumed Lord Lintern, "you, Lucy Peat, and you, Geeson, in the custody of the beadle, shall wait without; and you, sir," addressing Mutford, "while I attend to other business in another part of the house, can rest here, if you please;" and rising from his seat, he withdrew.

Mutford, principally because his place of waiting had been pointed out to him, would not stay in the library. As soon as Lord Lintern disappeared, he also gained the hall, and without noticing the other parties, or waiting for their movements, went out through the open hall door, and strolled down an evergreen shrubbery to one side of the lawn. Terminating the broad path before him, he saw, after curving in his walk, the small but solidly built stone edifice which he had remarked on a former occasion, and which

was in a degree memorable to him since his first notice of it. It had a flight of steps, ascending to its entrance, and running the whole length of its front; and that front was of a tasty style of architecture, of an old date, and partially ornamented with cut stone. At one time, more than one door led into it, if, indeed, almost the whole of the lower part of the front had not been open, as some old green-houses are contrived; but at present, fresh mason-work filled up those original spaces, all but one door-way, in the middle of the little building, which was supplied with a substantial door, closely shut, and one small window, traversed, upon the outside, by thick iron bars.

From the library of the magistrate, Mutford had previously seen but a side of the solitary building; neither could its front be observed without entering and advancing some distance in the shrubbery in which he now was. Nor had he at once come in sight of it, after passing into the shadow of the evergreens. As has been noticed, the path curved ere he perceived it; and nearly for half an hour before, he had sat on a rustic chair, his mind occupied with conjectures as to Lucy Peat's mode of defence — and his soul now and then sinking within him as a hideous fear — shaken off, however — stirred, like a loathsome reptile getting life, in its depths. And when Mutford did arrive in view of the prison — for prison it was — something happened to add to his former curiosity concerning it. He heard his own name pronounced twice or thrice, in a vehement manner, although the speaker endeavoured to use a suppressed voice — almost, indeed, a whisper. At this moment he was about forty yards from the building. Glancing steadfastly to it, he saw a face inside the iron bars of the single window, and hands waving rapidly, as if to call him on. He quickened his pace; and still the voice pronounced his name, now adding, "For life and death! for life and death, Mutford! one word, — one word! and run, run — or we shall be interrupted! — nay, the guard is already alarmed! — run!"

Sharing the excitement in which he was thus addressed, Mutford did begin to run, when the bushes to his right were rudely broken through, and a powerfully built man

jumped out on the path between him and the person whom he now knew to be Lord Allen.

"You must return, sir, by the way you came," said the intruder — "hollo!" calling loudly to the building — "I say, Huckle! look to the window! go back, sir, leave this shrubbery altogether — Lord Lintern allows no one to walk in it, not even his friends, let alone a stranger — so back, back!"

The man advanced on Mutford, and while doing so, his friend Huckle quickly appeared through the barred window, forcing Lord Allen from it. The youth exclaimed loudly and passionately, but in vain; in a few seconds, Mutford lost sight of him and his keeper; and in a few more not even the sound of his voice was heard, however he had been silenced. And still the second keeper closed upon Mutford, in a hostile as well as insolent manner, and our friend, unprepared, at all times, to submit to such despotism, was going to remonstrate, but another matter drew his attention. The noise of galloping horses and fast rattling wheels came up the avenue, mixed with the low but agonised lament of a female voice. Mutford, clasping his hands, though not uttering a word, turned, and raced down the shrubbery. He gained a view of the hall door of Lord Lintern's mansion, and saw the overseer taking his sister Bessy out of Mas'r Fox's fly. The following instant he had pushed the parish king aside, and caught up Bessy in his own arms.

"Have a care," said the overseer — "handle her more gently; you may hurt her."

"Scoundrel! what do you mean by that? what do you mean by all you have done, as well as by what you now say? But no matter — 'tis not to you I appeal — follow us!"

He ran into the library, still carrying Bessy; and perceiving the magistrate and Geeson, Lucy Peat and the beadle reassembled in it, had scarce cleared the door when he began a loud and incoherent complaint against the overseer, and a demand for justice.

Lord Lintern, surprised, perhaps softened out of much of his usual cold sternness, assured him he should find

ample protection for himself and his sister; and the old man even arose, placed a chair for Bessy, and waited till she should be seated.

Mutford put her down, and proceeded to place her in the chair. All through this scene, her low heart-breaking cries had continued, and without clinging to her brother, she had hid her face in his bosom. Now, the instant that she sat on the chair, and that Lord Lintern had returned to his, Bessy sprang up, ran forward, and dropped, as if almost unconsciously, at his feet, covering her face with her hands.

"What *is* the matter, Bessy?" cried Mutford, following her slowly, and once more raising her: — "come, come," he continued, bearing her back to her chair, "sit down, I command you, and let us have justice done, whatever it may turn out to be; — there, sit still." He placed a hand on her shoulder — she seemed to shiver and shrink under his touch, and still covered her bent face with her hands.— "Now, my lord?" he added, turning to Lord Lintern.

"Is this the witness you have sent for by the overseer?" demanded the magistrate, addressing Lucy Peat. At the first sound of his voice, Bessy stilled her cries, and seemed to listen fearfully, while every limb trembled.

"This young lady *is* my witness," answered Lucy. "Miss Bessy," addressing her unhappy young mistress — "I do not bring you here of my own free accord; thank your wise brother for it more than you blame me; had he held back from ruining me this morning, I should never have opened my lips — although, to tell the truth, I be not much in your own debt of late; that is, since you made up your mind to tell me no more about the young gentleman, nor let me speak to you about him——"

"Wretched creature!" exclaimed Mutford, glancing a ghastly look of rage at the speaker.

"Maybe I be — maybe I bayn't, Mas'r Michael; — this much I'd have you learn, howsomever; it was you I blamed for Miss Bessy giving herself airs, and making me know my distance, when it grew too late to begin the lesson — you and not she; for I happened to overhear your

lectures to her some months ago; — ay, and I own she abided by them, and ever since strove to blind me and baffle me, *in that business;* but I kept my eyes in my head, and I don't think she has been too many for me, after all."

Again Mutford gave vent to an incoherent ejaculation; and Lord Lintern commanded Lucy to come to the point.

"Ay, to the point — common prostitute!" echoed Mutford, injudiciously, if nothing else.

"Don't call me names," retorted Lucy, her cheeks fading, and her brow blackening to the hues of deep malignity — "at least, don't call *me* any that you had rather not call — *her*."

"You must retire this moment, or say what you have to say, at once," resumed Lord Lintern.

"This it is at once, then, my Lord," volunteered the overseer, while poor Mutford's brain and eyes began to swim, and Bessy's tremblings increased till her teeth chattered — "that 'ere girl, too," pointing to Bessy, "is here on the same business what brings this here girl, Lucy Peat, before you."

"That is" — said Lord Lintern, appearing puzzled, and he paused.

"That is, she will have to tell your worship the name of her own child's father," added Lucy, nodding towards the magistrate.

She had scarce uttered these words, when, at the same instant, cries of different expressions escaped the brother and the sister, and the former rushed headlong out of the room, and the latter a second time tottered to Lord Lintern, and sank, as if in paralysis, at his feet.

The old despot, to do him justice, showed some feeling. He stooped, and attempted to raise Bessy, as he said, "Is it possible? — Is it true? — poor young woman! tell me, is it?"

Bessy, resisting his endeavours to place her on her feet, only renewed her pitiable moans of lamentation.

"It is true, your worship; and she won't go for to deny it; she doesn't; if she does, 'tis easy to prove it," observed Lucy Peat.

"And for revenge, then, and not to vindicate yourself, vile girl, you have sent for this unhappy young person?" demanded Lord Lintern.

"A little for revenge, I own; but chiefly because I thought that when your worship should hear all about *her* little misfortune, you might be inclined not to deal too hardly, as you promised, with *me*, on the head of my mistake about Sam Geeson."

"I have heard all that can be said on it, and still resolve not to spare you," answered the magistrate.

"Wait; stop a bit," resumed Lucy; "your worship has *not* heard all that can be said on it; she will have to tell you the father's name, yet; just ask her that, will you, my Lord?"

"Oh, I *will* tell you, Lord Lintern, I will tell you;" sobbed Bessy, her voice scarce audible; "I have made up my mind to tell you — ay, although I may seem to break through a solemn vow not to do so — a solemn oath, I should say. But oh, merciful Heaven! is it in this situation you are to hear the avowal from me! Oh, has it come to this! Can poverty — poverty only, sink me so very, very low — make me an object for the care of that parish overseer — subject me to be forced by him from my father's side — my sick, dying father! subject me to be placed here by the elbow of that wicked, wicked girl; no, no, no! — I cannot tell you! I never will! — never, — here, never, in this plight!" And Bessy, who had uttered these words at intervals, without exposing her face, now lay almost prostrate on the floor.

"If *I*, or a girl like me, refused to tell, your worship would talk of the treadmill," observed Lucy Peat.

"And I see no difference," urged the overseer, "between the cases of the two girls; this Miss Bessy, for all the pretensions of herself and her family gentility, as it were, are pennyless and friendless wanderers into the parish, deuce knows from where; ay, and not well conducted or orderly people, one of them, either — as Sam Geeson, there, could tell your worship, if he were not shy of speaking out on his own account; and so, for my part — and when I say it, I go on sure grounds — I don't

understand why Bessy Mutford should be spared the treadmill, for contempt of your worship's authority, no more than Lucy Peat."

Bessy suddenly sprang up, stood erect before her judge, wiping away her tears, and pushing aside her hair from her face with both her hands; and she spoke again in a comparatively firm tone.

"Lord Lintern, save me from this—from this terrible outrage! from the terrible insult of that man's words!—save me from it, as I am a lady; though—they indeed truly say—a poor one: as I am my father's daughter! as—as—but my other reasons you shall learn for your private information; pray let me have a pen, and a slip of paper—yes—I *will* declare the father of my child! Thanks, my Lord—" beginning to write,—"I will."

Half a minute afterwards Bessy handed him back the paper, with some lines written on it. Her eyes fixed on his face as he began to read them, and still her manner was firm and self-asserted. But her dash of courage failed her, and she had nearly cried out again, when she saw his brows suddenly bend, his sallow cheek redden, and, finally, a hard and scoffing smile curl his mouth, as he tore the paper in atoms, and said, "False! false, young mistress! or if not false, under your hand, or in your thought.—Look you, Bessy Mutford,"—he rose, and closely approached her—"I can prove it false, and I *will!* Not even by this clever turn shall you or yours destroy me." Turning to the overseer, he added, "She equivocates after all, and will not make the necessary declaration, but with that you need have nothing farther to do; the officers and magistrates of her own parish are the fit persons to enforce her answer, so send her to them. As for the other girl," confronting Lucy Peat, and frowning, "let her, as I have said—but no," recollecting himself—"summon the preacher before me, that's all; she has suffered enough already."

"I thought so," smiled Lucy, as Lord Lintern motioned the overseer to leave the audience-room, and Lucy to remain.

The overseer was again taking charge of Bessy, outside

Lord Lintern's house, and in the act of assisting her into Mas'r Fox's fly, when poor Mutford suddenly appeared from some place where he had been hiding, and, with a manner, a voice, and a look of imbecility — the wreck of excessive anguish and passion — besought the man, humbly besought him, not to execute parish law upon his sister, in his own person — nor with the aid of the constables ; — not to put her into the parish cart, and force her off from her father's ; but — (and Mutford clasped his hands and almost knelt, although a certain bitter sneer was hidden under his show of abject entreaty,) — to allow her to be removed by her own family ; and he promised faithfully and earnestly that they would do every thing right and needful — every thing to save the parish from being burdened ; and, if his request were granted, his gratitude to the overseer should know no bounds, and he would acknowledge himself that individual's debtor for ever.

White looked greatly embarrassed at this unexpected address, as well as at the strange tone of it, and the startling energy of the speaker. It would be difficult to say how he exactly felt ; however, he permitted Mutford to return alone with Bessy to their lodgings, upon the strength of the assurances given him that every thing " right and needful" would certainly be done with " the young woman."

During their ride home not a word was spoken between the brother and sister. " If she addresses me," resolved Mutford, " I will command her to be silent ; what have I to do with the sickening — maddening details which now make all the confidence — the forced confidence — she can impart to me ?"

But Bessy gave him no opportunity to reject any communication of hers.

When they gained their lodgings, they found their father dead. At first it struck upon the heart of Mutford that the last visit of the overseer had killed him ; that, in fact, the man had torn Bessy from her father's very presence, proclaiming her shame. In this, at least, however, he wronged White, and visited his poor sister with a too terrible accountability. Perhaps the fact of his being a

father himself — and, recently, an afflicted one — moderated the overseer's petty rage against Michael Mutford, on this single occasion. At all events, the man of authority, as Mutford learned from his landlady, had obtained private speech of Bessy, and induced her to leave the house, at first on false pretences, without even the knowledge of her unhappy parent. And the woman added, that "the poor dear old gentleman was suddenly taken very ill, a few moments afterwards, and died without a struggle, or, it would seem, without a pain."

Mutford ran to his journal, and wrote in it the few disjointed sentences already transcribed. When he had finished them, he sat some time in his chair, then suddenly left the house, and repaired to Lieutenant Graves's tower. His young friend reported that he made no allusion even to his father's death, nor presented the least outward symptom of distress of mind. On the contrary, his manner was gay, and his conversation turned on a score of playful topics; and, finally, he made a request for the loan of a considerable sum of money, which, he said, he wanted to meet certain secret claims upon him; such as modern sons do not generally explain to their serious parents. Lieutenant Graves readily obliged his friend; and Mutford directly left him, running down the sloping ground from the cliff, where they parted, towards the village, and laughing and talking while he remained in view.

It appears that, ere he again joined his sister, Mutford called upon the person of the village best able to superintend a funeral, and gave orders for one, for his father.

Bessy saw him about an hour afterwards. He came before her, as she still sat in the chamber of the dead, now silent but not composed. He looked a moment at the corpse, turned to her, took her hand, led her to it, and said, "Your farewell, Bessy."

She burst into fresh lamentations, asking him what he meant.

"Why, you know, surely," he replied, — "you, at least, (you heard my pledge to the overseer,) — *you must leave the parish directly.*"

" Michael, Michael ! "

" Not a word, dear Bessy. Not a word. It must be done. That 's all. I will see you safe in another parish. Safely disposed of ; nay, comfortably, comfortably, Bessy. Do not reply. Do not speak to me at all, for the present at least, or, indeed, for some time to come. Despatch, Bessy. Take your last leave of him. You keep me waiting."

Bessy once more cast herself on the dead body, and once more her cries were appalling.

" Come, now," resumed Mutford. She suffered him to lead her to the door of her own chamber.

" Put on your things for a walk," he added, " and do not be long. I will step back for you in a few minutes."

He returned to the sitting-room ; filled the previously empty grate with the pages of his half-written novel, and while they were burning, wrapped a cover round his unmutilated journal, sealed it carefully, and left it on a table, directed to Richard Graves — per stage.

His landlady entered the apartment at a summons from him. He paid his debts to her ; also put into her hands money for the discharge of all the other debts due of him and his deceased father, in the village ; requested her to forward the journal, a week after that day ; and finally wished her a good morning — stating that he would return soon, to see his father buried, according to the arrangement he had made for the purpose.

He trod back softly to Bessy's door. It was ajar. He saw her on her knees, and heard her say, as if concluding a spontaneous prayer — " but they have all abandoned me ; and does Heaven give me up too ! "

" Yes ! " thundered her brother's voice, at her back ; " you and me together ! Come, Bessy." She took his arm. They left the house. He conducted her through and past the village, and struck into green lanes and pathways, which, after more than two hours' walking, brought them upon a high road, leading to towns and villages cut off from much intercourse with the little retired place they had left. Bessy often faltered during their hurried progress ; and he always stopped to let her rest, — never

uttering a word to her; but, once, she thought she detected him glancing askance *at her figure*.

It was an unfavourable winter's day; and when he and she stopped at a little public house on the high road, — Mutford asking when the next stage would pass by for ——, the people were scarcely civil to their soiled, as well as humble attire, and agitated manner and appearance.

The stage passed soon. Both mounted to seats behind. It drove on; and for the rest of that day Bessy travelled she knew not whither. Towards night, her brother handed her down in a small town, conducted her to an humble inn, ordered refreshments, and left her alone, with a promise to see her soon again.

In about half an hour he returned, and sat down with her to a meal, of which neither partook much.

"You do not sleep here to-night, Bessy," he said, after the attendant had removed it; "I have provided more comfortable lodgings for you, whither we will directly repair, if you please; their proprietress is an elderly widow, of kind and agreeable manners, and of respectable character, for I have made myself sure. And I have paid her three months' rent, in advance, for you; and given her more money to meet your expenses during that time — on a moderate scale, indeed, as you will perceive — but, as I promised, still you may find yourself comfortable. So, put on your bonnet, and let us leave this house, at once — your luggage won't give much trouble, I fancy?"

He laughed slightly as he made this remark; and with an ominous shudder, and a new pang and horror added to her other griefs, Bessy quitted the inn, leaning on his arm. She drew conclusions of what was to happen from his words.

He soon introduced her to her future protectress, and installed her in her lodgings. They sat alone for a minute: but only for a minute. He started up and said, thrusting out his hand, as if he had suddenly and forcibly overcome a disinclination to do so — "Now, Bessy, good b'ye."

"And you leave me in this strange place, without a friend, Michael! — without our father!"

"How can I be a friend to you, Bessy, my dear? now at least, how can I — that is, so far as living together makes people friends? — when we lived together before, you know —— But we waste words, and, what is worse, time. Good b'ye; I *cannot*, even if I would, stay here with you, in common prudence. We must both live; and money is not to be earned by me in this little town. I must go where *my genius*" — he scoffed — "can be brought to a good market. Meantime, do not fear I shall keep money from you — when I get it. Before your present stock is exhausted, you shall hear from me, if you do not see me. Perhaps you *may* see me, at the end of three months, but I do not promise certainly: indeed, I cannot quite depend on myself, this moment. Yet I should like to see you after the expiration of about that time. We might possibly be able to *talk* to one another, then. At present, I repeat, Bessy — not a word, only good b'ye."

Bessy had often vainly interrupted him, with tears, beseechings, and remonstrances. As he now a second time extended his hand, she cast herself upon his neck, sobbing forth, "Stay with me, Michael! 'twill be for the best! Stay till I can have answers to the last letters I shall write, for justice, from this place!"

"For justice? — wait on you till then? and for that! Let me go, Bessy! Leave me free!"

"Brother! Michael; dear, dear brother!" she clung to him, in desperation; "*be* a father to me too!"

"Good b'ye, Bessy; and *I* call *you* sister; ay, and after all, dear, dear sister; but, good b'ye — God bless you!" He hurried out of the house.

Early the next morning, (and he must not have stopped a moment, after leaving his sister in the town in which he had established her, nor paused a moment during the night, on the road between the two places,) Mutford visited the undertaker in the sea-side village, and after night-fall, the same day, attended the interment of his father. To his satisfaction, as he afterwards said, his friend Lieutenant Graves did not yet seem aware of his recent misfortunes, for he appeared not at the funeral,

nor had he called at the poor lodgings lately occupied by the Mutfords.

The evening of the next day, Richard Graves was surprised by a visit from his old companion in his Temple chambers. And this gentleman also avers, that no signs of affliction struck him in Mutford's manner, or discourse, upon this occasion. Nay, he thought that his moody, though well-esteemed friend, was fast conquering his former morbidness of mind; and a strong proof of this welcome fact seemed evinced when Mutford, in a sprightly, off-handed way, asked *him*, too, for a pecuniary loan. He was about to *run over to the* Continent, he said, for a week's recreation, and he did not like to draw on his father. It need not be added, that he made no declaration of his father's death, much less of his sister's present situation.

Graves had not the sum required at hand; nor could he send to see about it, as he waited for an evening coach to take him down to the country upon a case in which he had been specially engaged. But he wrote a hasty line which would ensure the money to Mutford, by noon, at least, next day; and although he could not stay at home to make his friend welcome, the chambers and little Joey were again at his command. A few moments afterwards, Richard Graves hurried to meet the night-coach.

"I have kept my magnanimous resolves of never again borrowing money, have I not?" bitterly laughed Mutford to himself, as he lay down,—not to sleep—that night:—"but, though I robbed them openly, instead of under the fair face of friendship, money I *must* have for one or two little occasions: and I *will* repay them, by heavens!—there *is* a way left, after all: ay, and an honest way."

Next morning, before he arose, an event happened which, with its consequences, grievously unnerved, however, the unnatural courage and energy into which Mutford had strung himself. The following letter to Graves, in the country, will explain what is meant, at the same time that it supplies another instance of his successful affectation of good spirits under fearful depression, and, altogether, helps to unfold his character:—

My dear Dick,

I have just hopped out of a cage, temporarily supplied to me by the Jew broker for the old debt you know of, and how I do thank him! what a pleasing glimpse of men and things, which otherwise I might have gone to my grave without seeing, has he given me!—I make nothing of the gentleman in full dress, who so politely wished me a good morning, at my bed-side, saying that he had just looked in about that little account of Mr. Abraham Levi. But after threading, at his side, and exactly wherever he liked, a labyrinth of dirty streets which I had never before dreamt of, see me halted before an open door, ornamented with a great brass plate bearing the inscription of "Mr. Thomas Hunks, sheriff's officer."

A moment, my conductor dallied at the door with a colleague just come up: and from the few words that passed between them,—slang as it was,—I inferred the projected fate of a future fellow-sufferer. We entered the house; passed a half door, spiked, at about the middle of the passage, and a domestic familiar took me in charge, and, after a glance at my attire, was ushering me into a kind of tap-room, or coffee-room, on the ground floor; but my protector, who had seen the decency of your chambers, Graves, and unwisely invested me therewith, countermanded this proceeding, and, in hopes that I might be of some advantage to the establishment, peremptorily summoned a female waiter, and desired her to "show that gentleman up stairs."

The apartment into which I was accordingly shown, told, on the face of it, of a most daring attempt at an elegant drawing-room. It was thirty feet by twenty—I paced it each way—with large folding doors into an inner drawing room, as it were; its furniture consisted of a Brussels carpet, protected, except at the edges, by a cover of grey linen, and those edges showed a very gay and flaunting pattern; an ample sofa; six cane-bottomed small chairs, and two arm ones, all painted like rosewood, and (reason good) of a substantial, resisting construction, but yet drawing-room chairs; two chiffonniers, also mock-rosewood, with elegant white marble slabs at top, and flaming

pink silk at front; a bronzed and gilt chimney-glass; two *card* tables — (the only tables in the room) — one of them opened, and sustaining a china ink-stand, of magnificent size, richly gilt, and most redly flowered, and also a wafer-cup and sealing candlestick, of the same material and fashion; and, to conclude, superabundant chintz-pattern window-curtains, carefully shrouded in coarse white cotton.

As I entered, the grey covering of the Brussels carpet appeared crumpled near the fully-developed card table, and stained with shoe-dust, and other marks, and strewed with bits of paper, torn very small, pen-parings, and scraps of straw. The table also was similarly littered; and to it were drawn the two fine arm-chairs, as they had been left by the last tenant (and his friend) of this mournful and vainly-gilded drawing-room.

A first and innocent glance at the windows, through the rich curtain-folds, gave me none of the substantial symptoms of — (disguise it as thou wilt, O Mr. Thomas Hunks, sheriff's officer!) a prison: but a closer inspection undeceived me, and at the same time raised to the highest my good opinion of the delicate ingenuity that thus strove, no matter how futilely, to beguile out of a notion of his loss of freedom whatever long-pursed wight might be able and willing to pay for his share in the gentle delusion. Truly, no monstrous and ungainly iron bars appeared, crossing each other at rigid right angles, but rather a sufficient number of slight ones, tastefully rounded, and almost imperceptibly mixed up with the Venetian blinds, or substituted for the side-slips of the windows, or, haply, the divisions of the panes themselves.

I sat down, and looked about me, much and irresistibly amused. The sofa, the chairs, the chiffonniers, and particularly the chimney-glass, had an out-of-place and forlorn air; they looked as if they had been arrested for a bad debt, and knew it. Notwithstanding the strong make of the chairs, they had not only lost many of their brass ornaments, but were shaken in their joints. The crank of one of the bell-pulls was broken, and would not ring the bell, at that side; and the embossed brass pendant of the

other had been violently jerked off. I imagined the state of mind in which some of the last inmates of my drawing-room had started up from the table, to appeal to them. Nay, the very fine chimney-glass was cracked; and who did that? and under what kind of excitement had the imprisoned debtor thus foolishly added a new and heavy item to the account against him? But my sketch is done, and I close my letter, although, when I took up the pen, I believe it was my intention, or my impulse, to have written a longer one, upon something or other. As to my sojourn in the sponging-house, give yourself no uneasiness about that. It was of very short duration. With the help of a friend, I bade it adieu, in less than two hours after I entered it. And I write this upon the eve of a journey, I hope; so, you need not wonder if I do not call back to your chambers to ask after the success of your special case. I am glad, however, that we met last night, very glad. Good b'ye, dear Graves — always dear, dear Graves,

MICHAEL MUTFORD.

When you see your brother, fail not to remember me to him.

The evening of the morning upon which Richard Graves received this letter, in the country, he returned to town, his mind not at ease on account of his friend. He could not, indeed, define to himself why he feared and doubted, or what; and yet he did.

His uneasiness was not allayed by a discovery he made, upon entering his chambers. A letter lay on his table, directed to Michael Mutford, Esq., in the handwriting of the persons to whom he had written instructions to enclose to Mutford the money spoken of, the evening before the last. Graves took up the letter, and assured himself that it contained bank-notes. He started.

When he had read in Mutford's pleasant epistle, giving an account of the sheriff's officer's drawing-room, that "with the help of a friend," he had quickly recovered his freedom, Graves concluded himself to be meant. Here,

however, was demonstration to the contrary. Some other person (if any) must have advanced to Mutford the means of escaping from durance: "and alas!" was Graves's reflection, "I do not think there *is* another individual in this town, enough the friend of poor Michael to offer him even so trifling an assistance: certainly not one from whom he would accept a pecuniary favour."

Was Mutford, then, still in the law's safe keeping? or, what was this *journey* of which he spoke? Graves recollected his expressed intention of taking "a trip to the Continent:" and the thought chased away another startling one. But again came the question of funds, for, again, supposing the journey, funds would be doubly necessary. Graves grew more troubled.

His chamber attendant, "little Joey," came in from an outer room, with another letter in his hand, and the boy earnestly apologised for having forgotten to deliver it to his master till that moment: for it had arrived by the morning's post, from the country.—Graves, looking at the superscription, knew his brother Alexander's hand. He opened it, began reading it, and was trembling in his chair before he had done. It communicated, in hasty and general terms, and imperfectly, as the writer had just learned them, the misfortunes lately suffered by the Mutfords; the death of the father; the exposure of the sister; and the flight of the son with her, no one knew in what direction; and it concluded with an anxious appeal to Richard Graves, to try and discover the retreat of his friend, in London; as, according to the information of the coachman of the stage from the sea-houses, thither Mutford had gone, alone, at his last departure.

The moment after he had perused this letter, Graves left his chamber, and proceeded in a coach to the house of Mr. Thomas Hunks, sheriff's officer. One question and one answer decided the truth of Mutford's assertion of having regained his liberty. He had insisted on being conveyed to prison, Mr. Hunks said, about an hour after his arrival in his establishment, and accordingly was "walked" to the Fleet, without even discharging the score incurred during his stay in the house.

"In the first place, what score was that?" Graves demanded.

"Why, the gentleman had got the treatment of a gentleman; was put into the drawing-room, no less; and though he declined breakfasting, or having a fire ——"

"And stayed with you but an hour — I know — here is my card — and there are five pounds — pay yourself 'the score,' and send the balance to my chambers, in the morning — you see it is not an address worth trying tricks on, sir — and now your receipt for *your* claim on my friend — and make haste, Mr. Hunks."

And Mr. Hunks, after perusing Graves's card, did make haste.

Soon after, Graves was listening, with horror, scarce kept from breaking out into exclamations, to an account of Michael Mutford's present condition, conduct, and actions, within the walls of the Fleet prison. The narrator was an official of the wretched Bastile.

Ever since he had entered, the man said, the gentleman had gone without food, and, it was feared, intended to refuse it to the last; and he never rose from his straw mattress, in one of the worst rooms of the house — for he could not pay for good accommodation — morning or night; and, very probably, he ought now to be under the doctor's hands, in the hospital; for, though he made no complaint in words, his moans, when he thought no one heard him, were severe; and he writhed about, like one suffering acute pain all over his body.

A short time only elapsed, after this account of the not unfeeling prison-servant, until the authorities of the Fleet ceased to possess any power of control over the person of Michael Mutford. While Graves transacted his business with them, a medical gentleman, at his instance, visited Mutford in his wretched chamber; and the young barrister was free to receive his report, when he came back to make it. Mr. Mutford suffered, he said, under a severe attack of nervous and rheumatic pains, partly produced by cold, partly, he surmised, by mental excitement; and they were accompanied by a degree of fever; and, altogether, the patient required immediate and careful attention.

Could he be removed, at once? Yes; but it must be with competent assistance, for certainly he was not able to put a limb under him at present. Graves required no more instructions. He was grasping Mutford's hands a few seconds afterwards, and, without a single allusion to the past, entreating him to come home to his chambers, and Joey.

Mutford did not for some time return his greetings, nor reply to his words; he only stared with a wretched expression at his friend. Presently, however, Graves felt him answer the pressure of his hand, and heard him mutter hoarsely, "I thank you, Graves; *I must*, as usual:" and then he made a vain effort to rise; vain, indeed, for he fell back on his mattress with a stifled shriek. As he offered, however, no resistance to the prompt efforts to remove him, Graves was soon supporting him, an arm round his body, in a coach, well wrapped up; and zealous friendship and habits of judicious exertion combined to make poor Mutford as comfortable as possible, in Graves's Temple chambers. A hot bath, a slight refreshment, a drop of wine, and an anodyne, set him asleep for the night; and in the morning, he arose without fever, though not yet free from pain, nor able to use his limbs. Still, Graves refrained from any allusion to the past. It was evident, however, that Mutford looked consciously at him whenever he entered his bed-room, and watched his eyes, as if for a silent admission of facts. Towards evening the patient was much better, and, without declaring his intention to his host, crept out of bed, dressed, and surprised him, holding by the door and walls as he approached, with a visit in his study. Graves sprang up, joyfully took his arm, placed him in a chair at the fire, and sat opposite to him. Mutford smiled weakly, in answer to his good spirits, and they had tea together, and seemed growing cheerful in reality. Now came a question.

"Mutford," said Graves, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder, "tell me one thing, like a man — did you treat me nobly or kindly in that last letter of yours?"

"No, indeed, Graves; very shabbily."

"Well, then: so much said, we pass it by for ever and a day."

"Thank you, Graves."

"Tut! Have you given up your projected trip to the Continent?"

A change of deep and bitter feelings rushed for a moment over Mutford's face. It as quickly subsided, however, or he adroitly mastered it; and then he answered, good-humouredly, to all appearance, "I believe I must give it up, for this rheumatic attack leaves me little power of locomotion."

"But the Continent is the very best place to shake off the attack?" queried Graves.

"Or for future exertion of any kind, I fear," added Mutford, in a tone so suddenly filled with despondency that it startled his friend.

"Pho, nonsense! for a man of three-and-twenty."

"Three-and-twenty — *in years,* dear Graves."

"Now go on with your Byron, and all that; a quotation from Manfred, which, by the way, is a quotation itself."

"Indeed I will not. But, in plain earnest, I do feel that a cripple — a poor one, I mean — must look to give up a good many little projects, of pleasure, of ambition, of endeavour, of any thing, according to his inward nature and outside relations, (suppose even self-justification, or just vengeance,) which may have been formed before he became a cripple."

"My dear Michael, you are buckling on your back, for life, a knapsack that, at your age, is generally carried for a few days, and then tossed off, and kicked away for ever."

"The rascal pains, and those stiffening and contracting muscles, have, indeed, sadly changed me, Graves," resumed Mutford: he spoke in a heartless voice, and his eyes glistened with moisture.

"Well, well; I will positively not speak another word on the subject with you, till you shall have had a few more good nights' sleep, Mutford."

"Then don't forget the opium," said Mutford. "But it is time I asked *you* a question, Graves. Do you know any thing more of me, of late, than what *I* know you know?" He spoke, resting his hands on his knees, and

fixing his eyes on the fire, as his head drooped to his breast.

"I do," answered Graves, also without looking up. There was a long pause.

"How much more?" continued Mutford.

"The whole, my dear fellow."

They went on conversing, and Mutford gave Graves a good deal of his confidence; seemingly all, yet not all: and Graves could not doubt the truth of one of his answers to continued questions; yet, once or twice, Mutford deliberately and systematically said what was not true.

For instance: he pretended that his sister Bessy had not left the village on the coast at all, but was still living there, in secret, under the protection of an attentive though humble woman. And the renewed mention of her name and situation affected him greatly, his friend observed, though he erred in thinking *how:* and Mutford seemed all at once to be filled with much anxiety to return to her, and henceforth protect her, himself, as well as he could.

But nothing was farther from his mind than the last attributed intention. Under his present feelings, he never again wished to see her face. And when he left Graves for the night, he never again wished to see *his* face.

Next morning, however, professing to be almost completely rid of pain, and, with the aid of a stick, quite able to get about, Mutford saluted his friend blithely, agreed to laugh at his gloomy speeches of the night before, and sat down to breakfast in apparently brilliant spirits.

"He has been watching me, I fear," was Mutford's thought before he left his chamber; "and I must and will baffle him."

The day wore on. He grew better and better, or avowed he did; and about six o'clock in the evening suddenly expressed a resolve to run down to his sister, that very night, in the mail. Graves raised up his hands, and eyes, and voice against the proposal. He should, at least, positively stay till morning; travelling at night would give him his pains again.

"Ten to one with you, for any amount, it cures them for ever? Come, come, dear Graves; the thing must happen."

His friend was obliged to yield. They set out together to take a place in the mail; and Graves saw it and Mutford fairly started out of London, on their way to the coast.

The young barrister returned to his chambers, and with much difficulty strove to bend his mind to business which was awaiting his attention. Hours of the night wore away. He had sent out little Joey on a message, down to the west end. The boy came back at a very late hour, eleven o'clock, in fact; and after discharging himself of his commission, requested to know if Mr. Mutford had not left town, at eight o'clock, in a mail coach? Graves, greatly astonished at the question, said he had.

"Then he has returned to town again, sir," resumed Joey: "I saw him, while out on your errand, coming out of a pawnbroker's shop in Wardour-street, and followed him afterwards, till he went into the Golden Lion hotel and coffee-house, in Piccadilly."

"What, Joey! are you quite, quite sure?"

Joey insisted that he could not be mistaken. "Call a coach, then, directly, and put on your hat — for you must come with me."

It was to make the boy point out the pawnbroker's shop in Wardour-street that Graves took him with him. Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, nearly midnight, he prevailed on the proprietor to admit him, and answer a few questions. He described Mutford's remarkable face and person, and the man was certain, or nearly so, that Mutford had, indeed, been in his shop, at about half-past ten, that evening, and made a purchase.

"What articles?" asked Graves.

"Pistols."

The proprietress of the Golden Lion, and her Boots, had not yet retired to rest, when Graves knocked at their door. To his rapid enquiries, they answered, in something like his own alarm, that, doubtless, the friend he sought was in the house; and the lady added, on no good intent, she feared.

"But no noise from his room yet?" demanded Graves.

"None — but the chambermaid gave strange accounts

of his conduct, since she had lighted him to his chamber; and, after sitting a moment in the coffee-room, before he went up stairs, a little gunpowder, and one small, very small bullet, had been found under the seat he had occupied."

"His room! his room! this moment!" cried Graves: "has he locked himself in?"

Boots, who took a candle to comply with Graves's demand, said that the chambermaid could give the best information. Graves sprang up the stairs of the hotel. Arrived in a long corridor, his attendant pointed out the door of the chamber, before they reached it. Graves paused a moment. It was ajar; light streamed from it; it opened; and a young woman, interesting for her situation in life, and gentle and even graceful, though not handsome, came from it with a candle in her hand. She was weeping, and as she turned the bolt, to shut the door after her, she said, "Good night again, sir."

Graves stepped forward rapidly, though on tiptoe; he was about to open the door, when the tenant of the chamber was heard bounding from his bed, and locking and bolting himself in. This sudden circumstance nearly made Graves cry out to Mutford aloud, and attempt to burst open the door; but an instant's thought, producing a rush of curdling fear, checked his voice and his hands. "At my first recognised cry, the savage will start up in him, and he will mar our meeting with one touch of his finger!"

He turned softly from the door — beckoned Boots aside, and whispered him to walk close by the chamber as often as would seem consistent with the absence of intention; nay, to whistle and to sing. The lad obeyed these instructions. Graves then tore off the back of a letter, and with a trembling hand pencilled the following lines: — "My dear Mutford, I pursued the mail to claim the assistance of your friendship, in the greatest and the most unexpected misfortune that has ever yet befallen me. They told me you quitted it, a short way out of town, too ill to go on; an old acquaintance saw you turn in here. I implore you, if your health at all permits, to give over

sleep for this night; get up, and ride home to counsel, and, if possible, keep me from destroying myself.

" R. G——"

" You, my dear, you," said Graves, turning to the chambermaid, who held the candle for him to write — " 't is you shall hand him this; and ask him to open his door, with your soft voice and kind words — I see he has made you weep already."

" ' 'Twas because he wept himself, sir, sitting up in bed, after he had been alone two hours, when I went in to answer a sudden pull at his bell," whispered the girl; " and he told me he wanted to say something particular to me before he should fall asleep, and desired me to sit on the chair by the bed; and took my hand, sir; but, after that, he said never a word; only cried, cried, sir, like a woman, — though not in the least loud; till at last he seemed to forget I was there; and I took my hand from him, without his noticing, and fetched away the candle, as you saw, when you came up stairs."

" Ay, he clung to the touch of the last earthly creature who was unexpectedly kind to him!" thought Graves — " but come, my dear — this slip of paper — request him to open his door — and may God bless your endeavour!"

" What do you mean, sir?" asked the girl, frightened.

" Do not stop to ask me — do not, my dear — and you will tap gently, and — and speak before you tap — that will be best — and do not tell him you have a note or a message from any one till he lets you in. So — now — speak, speak."

And Graves shut his eyes, and pressed his hands on his ears, in a horrid fear of the impulse that might give action to the finger which, he believed, Mutford had that instant on a trigger. But the self-doomed *did* answer the musical and soothing tones of the now not assured girl at his door; and shortly the door opened, and she went in.

" Where is the writer of this?" Graves now heard him demand — " who brought it?"

" I don't know, sir," answered the girl, " *who* wrote it, but the gentleman who gave it to me ——"

"Gentleman!" — Mutford's voice rose high, though it shook fearfully — "and he is in the house?"

"He is, sir, — but till you gave us permission ——"

"Send him up this moment! Why has he *not* come up, at once! — quick, quick!"

When Graves entered the chamber, in a state of grief and agitation well suited to his purpose, though it was very far from being feigned, he found Mutford nearly dressed in a chair at the bed-side.

"Oh, dear Mutford, now indeed I ask a service of your friendship!" said Graves, after their first greetings had passed — "Oh, my dear fellow, such an unexpected misery — if not ruin! — But I am not at liberty to speak on it, even with you, till you pledge yourself to the deepest secrecy: so your hand — and promise." Mutford placed his hand in his friend's — Graves instantly grasped it tight with all his strength — (and he was stronger than Mutford in Mutford's best day) — swung him from the chair, far from the bed, till he staggered against the wall near the door — and there Graves secured both his arms, and continued — "And now, man! — now, coward and wretched man! man, that call yourself a Christian man — yet that dared plot this! man, that has a friend — a true and loving friend — and yet could plan to leave him, for his life, the memory of this!"

"What — what — what?" stammered poor Mutford, the high and not unsublime temper and language of his old friend stunning him, after his recent despair — his dark, dark strugglings and enfeebling resolves — "what mean you, Richard?"

"What mean I? — answer me, I say! what have you hidden this moment in your bed? — Oh, my dear, dear Mutford!" — he suddenly changed his tone, and clasped his friend to his breast, "forgive me, forgive me this language — but it is not meant to you — it seems to me that I have addressed it to some one who was about to do you a grievous injury, in my presence — forgive it, forget it — and tell me you will be my friend still!"

The almost congealed heart in Mutford's bosom re-melted at these last words, and his own bleared, blood-shot,

and wild eyes shed tears. The magnitude and purity of his friend's love of him overpowered every other feeling; and, deeply sincere, he knelt, scarcely knowing it, and, while he thanked Graves, and admitted the badness and foulness of his late thoughts, solemnly called on Heaven to witness that he was sorry for his sin, and would not attempt to repeat it.

And so impressive was his manner, and so convincing his words, that Graves instantly believed him.

"But I can no longer meet you face to face, Graves," he added — "not for a time, at least. We part, now. You may trust me. You need not watch me. We part. — I go, in truth and reality, to exert myself, as I can, for my sister — the poor little Bessy! I forgot her, indeed — or, worse than forgot her. It has been a blinding, besetting dream. But 't is past. We part, I say, Graves, this very hour — if not this very moment."

"Where go you, on the faith of a man?" asked Graves.

"To the sea-coast village where your brother is stationed, Graves — thither, on the faith of a man. Good by'e!"

The friends parted, indeed, a second time. And though Mutford certainly kept his first promise towards Graves, it soon seemed that he had again equivocated when he spoke of the place of his final destination. For, in a few days, Alexander Graves wrote another letter enquiring after his former friend; and adding that neither he nor his sister had been heard of since the date of his last, in the sea-side village, or the more inland one, lately Mutford's residence; in fact, in the parish or the county.

Lieutenant Graves added — what appeared to his brother an extraordinary, if not an alarming fact, — that he had received from Mutford, in a letter without a post-mark, the amount of the sum which Mutford had lately borrowed of him.

The following letters were in Mutford's pocket the night upon which his friend visited him in the hotel. He preserved them, and we are therefore able to transcribe them.

To Richard Graves, Esq.

My last letter to you, while you were attending your special case in the country, was, I thought, to have been my very last indeed. It was, therefore, I ended it by saying that I was glad, very glad we had met the night before. For, although, at that meeting, I did not contemplate a long leave-taking of you, dearest Richard, still, at the time of sending you the merry graphic sketch of Mr. Hunks's fine drawing-room, my mind was made up never to see again either you or the light of our strange world — that is, a more perfect modification of it than was vouchsafed by the cheerful windows of my then place of abode; and so, I called back our interview of the previous night in your happy chambers as a kind of farewell business, and felt pleased it had occurred, as I told you.

The means of passing myself into — rest — were to my hand in that prison — (so much an honour to the people of England who arrest other people of England for debts they cannot discharge, as well as to the humane legislators who permit the unmeasured vengeance, and who render themselves accountable for a fit Bastile for the pauper debtor.) Upon the straw where you found me, Richard, I needed to have lain only a little time, and all would have been well with me. I had no shillings to purchase food or drink; without the money, food or drink were scarce to be expected there; and thus, helped by the merciful pains, and the good fever, I was assured, I thought, of repose in a few days, perhaps in a few hours. And assured of it, too, without raising my own hand against myself; for it was no crime of mine to be racked with aches, and parched with fever; nor would it have been any, if hunger and thirst, with their kind assistants, had given me my *coup-de-grace*. I was only guilty of the irresistible — the — I will call it — involuntary wish — not to live.

You found me out, Richard, and compelled me to forego my soothing prospect. You touched my heart a little, too But even you and your unexampled love, and cares, and attentions, did not reinspire me with the slightest yearning

to go on drawing my wretched breath. As I write this secretly, in your inside chamber, while you are laudably and honourably exerting your mind, and acquiring fame, and adding to your worldly fortune, in your study without, I declare to you that life would be a bitter, bitter curse to me. Since the change wrought in my very soul, when I found myself a cripple on that miserable bed, I tell you, deliberately and truly, that the notion of living repels me and sickens me, as the notion of dying repels and sickens other men. Death and I have become good friends enough. I was, and I am, of the dead more than of the living: internally entered, already, into a future existence, and passed and gone out of this. My feeling will seem strange to you, but it is strong and well-defined to myself, and deeply, deeply seated. Writing, here, I can see the sun shining brightly (though in the heart of fetid London) upon the smooth gravelled court before your door, but there are shadow and gloom in that sun to me. I hear the outside hum, and clash, and crash, of the mixed animal tide — men, women, horses — which pours through a single street of your Babylon — and it is all dull and vague to me. It does not even irritate me now. Graves, I *cannot* live.

Good Moses, who caused me to be introduced to Mr. Hunks, I thank for my arrival at this conclusion, that is, if, indeed, it was he who deprived me of the last means of self-assertion, in this world — the strength of my body, and the use of my limbs. Character was gone, hope of fortune was gone; I had been outraged — hideously outraged; still, until the pangs of my prison-bed, the animal power, at least, of wreaking justice, only justice, on my last persecutor, was left with me; and, oh! often and often I laughed to myself, in pure pleasure, at the thought. Yes, Graves, helped by the money I had begged of you, it was my determination to speed to France — to track him — to meet him — to confront him — boy, or coward, or whatever he is — and —— But I merely waste paper. Now, 'tis all past by. I ask you again, what can the cripple do? — supposing him before me, I could not strike him to the earth. He would trample on me — a child

might do it. I have not even the bodily capability of pursuing him. To be sure, if I were near him, I might lie in wait, and, without giving him a chance, creep sufficiently close, perhaps, to murder him deliberately. But, standing as I do — even as I do — I cannot work myself up to that — exactly that.

Then, Graves, farewell! To-night one of my last earthly thoughts shall be of you.

Till then, I must baffle you, in your calculations of my mood, and probable intentions. To-morrow you will own I *am* able to play the — hypocrite, is it? — This letter, some one must find of course, in my pocket, and it will be forwarded to you. In it, you will discover another, which I pray you to put in the post, that it may reach its destination. You will perceive, by the direction, that I baffle you in yet another matter. But, Graves, I could not give you *her* real address. Not while I lived, I mean. Your heart might have led you to send some gentle female friend — perhaps some lady of your own family — to see her and to soothe her — and the knowledge of that would have cost me unimaginable agony. *My* lost, degraded sister, generously protected, and pitied, and *reclaimed* — by any one *you* knew? — impossible!

However, after to-night, I humbly beseech you, Graves, to exert yourself, for a little time, in her behalf. Perhaps, as I have conjectured, some good and kind, *and virtuous* woman would see her, at your instance: and then, in a few months, perhaps her little accomplishments might enable her to earn bread for herself; and for another wretched creature: she living alone, I mean — to herself — quite to herself: do not imagine I can for a moment contemplate her introduction into any reputable family.

And now, for the last time, indeed, good b'ye. Do not doubt I love you, my dear, dear Richard. I do. Man never loved man with a better, a purer love. Much less will you suppose that I can forget all the proofs I have received of your love for me.

It is — I feel it is — useless to wish you success and happiness in this world — I will add, in the next: for you

are a good and virtuous man, as well as a wise, a prudent, a talented, an industrious, and a fortunate one. Yet, I will not conclude without praying for you all that you merit to meet: increase of fame, of money, of friends—of—in one word, of all I have missed—a smiling, even life, here below, and, at your dying hour, an unclouded prospect of eternity.

Call me, to-morrow morning, in speaking of me, your friend, Michael Mutford: say—"my *still dear* friend"—if you *can* say it from the heart. Perhaps I may be made conscious of your having uttered the words. Good b'ye. Good b'ye!

M. M.

If possible, let *her* believe I have got an appointment in the Indies, and have gone to fill it.

To Miss Bessy Mutford.

When I parted from you last, my dearest Bessy, I thought I might have been able to stay near you, earning money for both our little wants, in England, and seeing you often. Since then, I have engaged myself to travel a long journey, in the hopes of bettering my condition. We shall not meet, therefore, so speedily as I could have wished: but I trust we shall, eventually. Meantime, it is likely that friends of mine will seek you out, and afford you some consolation and assistance for the present; and afterwards put you in a way, aided by money advanced on my account, to support yourself independently, during your life: independently, at least, if not very elegantly.

Should I not see you again before you are settled in some such way as another person and myself have been thinking of for you, I make but one earnest request, my dear sister. I entreat you—(and now, do not suppose I intentionally or unnecessarily would wound a single feeling of yours—and forgive me if my words shall not appear carefully or delicately chosen) I entreat you, dearest Bessy, to accept no occupation, no place, that would throw you

much into society: indeed, if you can help it, I would recommend you, as a brother and as a friend, who has never ceased to be anxious, most anxious about you, to live a life of almost strict seclusion. Indeed, will you not have enough occupation, amusement, and endearment too, to keep you constantly in your little home?—I can mean but one kind of endearment, Bessy—that of your innocent infant; for I protest to you, Bessy, on the faith and honour of a man, that I have not the slightest, slightest fear or suspicion you intend ever, ever to see my deadly enemy again. I have not the slightest suspicion that your heart is bad, indeed, and therefore I cannot cherish that other hateful suspicion. What has happened, I firmly believe to have resulted, on your part, from unsuspecting innocence, extreme youth, credulity, and over-sensitiveness, together, and not from premeditation, or habitual want of principle. Hence, I will not carry with me, upon my far, far journey, a doubt of your future conduct. For other reasons, too, I will not. I know you loved our poor father, and is he not now watching you, from Heaven? I know you do love me, and if I shall not be watching you, shall I not be thinking of you, my poor sister? And will you not be thinking of me? of what I have suffered, in common with our father and you—and all at the hands of the family of the paltry coward who has wronged you, and fixed a blot on my name for ever?

Farewell, Bessy. I have said I hoped that we may be doomed to see each other again: I repeat the hope fondly, very fondly. But events are uncertain, dearest sister; and, considering that my proposed journey *is* to be a perilous one, and that my point of destination is very distant, I will—allowing for every chance—make my last adieus to you, in this letter. And adieu, then, Bessy, always dearly beloved, and now most tenderly beloved sister. Oh, do not, do not entertain an idea that my affection for you has ever, ever abated! You know it to have been strong, pure, full—soft, soft, too, although strong—a tearful affection. You know it to have been such since you were a little lisping child, down, *at least*—that is, as I am afraid *you* think—down, at least, to a certain day and moment. This *you*

know. And I, Bessy, *I* know, and *I* feel, that down to the very present moment it has never, never changed: that while I write, with blinded eyes and throbbing heart, it is even greater than it has been. For any word or act of mine, look or gesture, that at any time, under any circumstances, may have made you doubt the state of my heart towards you, I implore your forgiveness: were I by your gentle side I would kneel until you said you believed me, and pardoned me. And after that, I am sure that if ever, on your part, a question of my love towards you slightly chilled yours towards me, you would be able to assure me of a full return of all your old feelings. Nay, I will take for granted now, that my written professions produce the same effect, and that we shall stand, with regard to one another, after your perusal of my letter, the same brother and sister we have been in happier days.

And so, on this understanding, this most happy understanding, again farewell, Bessy, my little gentle sister. God knows how I wish I could stay near you, to guard you, and to cherish you, till the end of either of our lives! But necessity, dearest, necessity wills it otherwise. To that we must both submit. One last parting word. If you have erred a little, you know, you know the future can amend your fault. And with this feeling in your gentle heart, and a constant recurrence to the religious principles so well fixed in it, since your childhood, I try to hope that your future may not be — assisted by friends, of which make little doubt — very unhappy. Remember you have nothing to charge yourself with, so far as I am concerned. Remember, too, our good, and kind, and lofty-spirited father, went from us before he knew any thing that could have cost him a pang on your account: that fact I have since ascertained, and I urge it here as my parting word of consolation. Yes, my parting word. For the very, very last time, adieu, adieu, my gentle little sister, Bessy!

M. M.

Should you ever again visit Yorkshire, and be permitted to enter our old garden, look at the rose-bush which I helped to plant on your birthday.

Recurrence is now made to Lord Lintern's house, upon the day when Bessy Mutford came for judgment before him.

It will be remembered that he delivered up Bessy to the care of the overseer, and in the same breath ordered him to summon Mr. Boakes into the magisterial presence. Bessy, the overseer, and the grinning and delighted Sam Geeson withdrew. He commanded Lucy Peat to await the overseer's return with her spiritual instructor.

The girl and Lord Lintern remained alone in the justice-room, or library. He sat a few minutes in his chair, his eyes fixed on Lucy. He got up, cautiously fastened the door, resumed his seat, and addressed her.

"How long have you been living in this family?"

"Almost since they came to the sea-side," Lucy said.

"And so, you have had opportunities for observing Miss Mutford's intimacy with the young gentleman you mean?"

Opportunities enough, *she* knew.

"When did you first begin to notice that intimacy?"

"I will swear to between six and seven months, my Lord."

Lord Lintern paused to call back to his mind the time of Mutford's first appearance before him, accompanied by Bessy, to complain of the vagaries of the independent Mr. Wiggins. He calculated it to be about six or seven months ago. The (for him) vivacious admiration evinced by his son George towards Bessy Mutford then reoccurred to Lord Lintern. He continued.

"What circumstances of the intimacy have come under your eyes, or to your personal knowledge?"

"Why, my Lord," answered Lucy, endeavouring to look a little embarrassed, as she felt she ought to do, "just such as a looker-on can get a knowledge of, without — without being able to swear to any thing particklar — that is, very particklar."

"What do you mean by a looker-on? — a go-between, is it?"

Lucy reddened and frowned, and seemed strongly disposed to vindicate herself against this homely epithet, if she durst. Her habitual self-command, however, enabled her to take no vengeance farther than sitting silent.

"Who employed you oftenest?"

"Employed me!" she repeated.

"Tut—take that book in your hand."

Lucy tamed by the name and the sight of the book into a wholesome recollection of her situation, in the distance of which was a loose sketch of the ever-busy treadmill, did as she was bid. The magistrate administered to her an oath, by virtue of which she bound herself to answer the whole truth and nothing but the truth, to such questions as he should propose to her.

"And now," he resumed, "did you ever receive money from either party, in this business?"

"A little," Lucy answered.

"From both?"

"No, bless you, my Lord,—one of 'em had little of it to spare, *I* know."

"From the young gentleman then?"

The witness agreed.

"Money, how often?"

She could not take upon her, on her oath, to say downright how often.

"Well. What were you asked to do for the money?"

"Sometimes to carry a message, sometimes a letter—and sometimes to say a word, as if from herself, to Miss Bessy."

"I comprehend. You mean you were to praise the engaging qualities of your employer:"—again Lucy winced and bit her lips; so loath are some people, ay, and some of "the best of people," sometimes,—kings, kings' ministers, and kings' female friends, among the number—to call, in their own hearts and minds, their own hearts and characters, by such names as Locke would have been contented with:—"Well: have you ever seen any of the young gentleman's letters to the—to your young mistress?"

"Never:" although, as she was on her oath, the ingenuous witness admitted, that she had often and often tried

to come upon them among Miss Bessy's papers, when Miss Bessy used to be out.

" That was right. But with regard to the messages, of what nature were they?"

" Sometimes Lucy was the bearer of a request to Miss Bessy to meet the young gentleman, down by the clift; sometimes to admit him into the house, after her father and her brother should be a-bed."

" Did you always get answers to those messages?"

" At first, always; but, lately, after Mr. Michael Mutford spoke to Miss Bessy, the young lady was more close, and would answer nothing, good, bad, or indifferent, but turn away, and leave the room; though, the witness believed, and was sure, she went out to meet her lover, for all that."

" How are you so sure?"

" Why, Miss Bessy often stole out for a walk, alone — a thing she scarce ever before did."

" That is no proof ——"

Lucy was coming to the proof of one stolen interview, at least. She watched Miss Bessy one day — the very last, she believed, the young gentleman and Miss Bessy had met, and came upon him and her just as her young mistress was quitting him in a high passion — her voice loud — her cheeks red, and her eyes as if she had been crying; and the witness had little doubt that Miss Bessy now remembered the day well."

" But, before that day, you had never seen them together?"

" Not that the witness could swear."

" Of what nature were the answers of the mistress of the witness to the young gentleman's messages?"

" Quite kind and good-humoured, only in her own way, roundabout, at first, and modest, as it were; in fact what she, Lucy Peat, called sly."

" Where did you usually meet your employer?"

At this third offence, Lucy answered rapidly and with some dignity, " up and down, here and there, by chance and by appointment; and his lordship might call to mind the evening when his lordship was interposing to put a stop

to the doings at the Anchor — that was one of the nights she met him, on horseback, along with his lordship ; in the thick of the row, ay, and got a message from him, too, for Miss Bessy Mutford."

" Now attend. Upon any occasion, when you received a message from the young gentleman, was marriage spoken of ? "

" Marriage ! " Lucy flouted the idea. " Marriage, indeed, between the Honourable George Allen and a poor proud beggar that nobody knew any thing about ! Never a single word of the kind was spoken. If there had been, Lucy would have thought it her duty to put his lordship on his guard directly." And, in saying this, Lucy's wisdom led her to believe she was saying what would get her into favour with Lord Lintern.

" I owe you thanks for your honest feelings, so far as they concern me. And they do you credit in the eyes of the world. Certainly, it would have been one thing to have assisted your employer to get married to a poor young lady," (Lord Lintern did not know, himself, what a change was now taking place in his feelings towards Bessy Mutford) — " that, indeed, would have been one thing ; while your taking his money — and money, which, as a boy, he had no right to disburse in such a way — to help him to seduce the same young lady, was another thing."

" What, my lord ! " began Lucy, vaguely aware that her eloquence had not served her to the extent she had calculated ; the magistrate stopped her with a frown, and continued.

" You say you have been the bearer of a message to this unfortunate young person, praying her to admit the Honourable George Allen into the house, after her father and her brother should have retired to bed ; you have also said you never saw the parties in question together but once ; I am, therefore, to conclude, that you never saw them together in the house ? "

This was assented to.

" Could he have been admitted without your knowledge ? "

Lucy Peat, doing her powers of observation only common justice, — " believed — was sure not."

" Had Miss Mutford ever consented, in reply to such a message, to admit him, or allow him to be admitted? or were such messages of the kind to which she used to make no answer, but turn from and leave the room?"

The witness, after a pause, agreed with his lordship.

Lord Lintern also paused. His dry and horny face assumed a melancholy expression, which, however, did not injure it. He sighed, shortly, slightly, and as if with an almost simultaneous effort to check the involuntary action. He spoke again to Lucy Peat, and his tones were softer than usual.

" Give me the name of the street, and of the proprietor of the house in which Miss Bessy Mutford lives."

The astonished Lucy complied. He wrote deliberately at her dictation; and, as some persons passed by the windows at his back, folded up the paper, and arose and unfastened the door, saying to her,—" We have ended *this* subject."

He had scarce regained his chair, when Mr. Boakes entered, introduced by the overseer and the beadle.

Lord Lintern regarded the man at first with honest indignation; for, after all, despotism, obstinacy, self-opinion, and, resulting from these, unmeasured severity and harshness, were the chief faults for which his lordship was accountable to man, or in his social character. But, at the second glance, the old magistrate's countenance displayed nothing but great astonishment. He saw a person before him, convicted, upon unquestionable testimony, of almost as much moral turpitude as low sensuality and hypocrisy united could engender; and yet he saw that man enter his presence, and stand before his face, unabashed; apparently unanxious; no pallor in his huge high-fed cheeks; no unsteadiness in his round, black horse-eye; and, in the place of a bullying attitude, only the consummate acting of meekness and unconsciousness of fault. Acting, Lord Lintern construed it: let us hope it was not: let us hope, at the least, that the natural blockheadism of the absurd zealot made him really believe in the truth of some of the self-absolving doctrines he preached.

It is unnecessary to place, in question and answer, the

interview which ensued, before the reader. Mr. Boakes was called upon to pay a weekly sum for the support of Lucy Peat's former child; to advance money for her second approaching event; and to enter into security for the sustenance of its result, if that result should prove continuous.

But Mr. Boakes hemmed, and spoke round sentences, inlaid with his own peculiar grammar, and cant, and slang united, and professed his utter inability to meet such a demand; his poverty, and his usual waiting upon Providence for the mere necessary comforts of this imperfect life; and —so forth; but when he was seasonably interrupted, and as seasonably urged, he did consent to an arrangement as follows. Forinasmuch as the worthy Mrs. Boakes, understanding the nature of the visit, just made at his house by worthy Mr. Overseer, and worthy Mr. Beadle, had directly removed herself from his roof, with a declaration that she would never abide under it again; and also seeing that, in such a state of lonesomeness, some careful and adroit female hand would be desirable in his establishment, to order and direct things of which his own occupations and thoughts left him no knowledge, and little leisure to attend to; considering these two heads of the discourse, and farther adding, thereunto, the reflection that, in the short-sighted notions of the world, he might be bound to make some satisfaction for a seeming error;—under all these circumstances, he took it upon himself to give Lucy Peat permission to accompany him home merely in the capacity of his housekeeper, or managing servant; guaranteeing to have her carefully attended in her need; and also promising, either to pay the parish for the burden she had already put upon it, or to remove the child unto his own home also.

Lord Lintern, after conferring with the overseer, assented to this settlement of the case for the present: and Lucy Peat and Mr. Boakes left the magisterial chamber, to face a scandalised crowd (none of whom visited Mr. Boakes's chapel) in waiting for them, a little distance from Lord Lintern's abode. Honest women, old and young, composed that crowd; children of both sexes followed its skirts; over whose heads, to one side, peeped Sam Geeson,

grinning amain; to the other, Mas'r Fox, also grinning, after his own fashion, and in his own meaning: he had just exchanged sly greetings with a certain fresh-faced maiden, whom he and Michael Mutford once met on the road; and, to conclude, the principal detachment of this army of abomination was headed by the Missis Alice French, who had served as a study to Mutford, in the committee-room; who would not be called "dame;" and who so rigorously insisted on the shilling a week "to help pay her rent."

Lord Lintern and the overseer remained some time conferring together: after which, the king of parish vagrants, parish paupers, and parish sinners, repaired to the obscure lodgings of the Mutfords. There he learned that, after giving orders to an undertaker about his father's funeral, Michael Mutford, with his sister, had gone, no one knew whither. He returned to Lord Lintern. He was again despatched to make enquiries. They proved fruitless.

The old magistrate was observed, by all his servants, to pass the remainder of that day, and the ensuing evening, in unusually bad spirits: at least, in ill-humour, or bad temper, of a novel kind. They also noticed that he despatched a letter to his son George, to the Continent, after having spent a long time writing it.

The next evening they saw him, with surprise, issue forth alone, studiously muffled up. One of them watched him, and tracked him. Lord Lintern was seen to mingle with the few who followed the corpse of Mutford's father to the grave. And Mutford himself did not know, could not guess, that a message delivered to him, after the interment, to the purport that a gentleman requested to speak with him, at the other side of the churchyard — and from which message he flew away as if it had announced his destruction — Mutford did not, could not imagine that it was Lord Lintern who had sent it.

The unloved and lonely despot-father walked home slowly, thoughtfully; and, perhaps for one of the first times in his life, not fully possessed with the conviction that the power which place and money give of moving events and persons, can of itself confer happiness on its

possessor. Considering how often and how arbitrarily he had used that power, this reflection, it is admitted, savoured more of selfishness than of high-mindedness — of regret on his own account, than for others who had suffered, at least equally with him, in consequence of his mistake. — No matter. Taking the nature he bears, in common with us, as it is, in reality, even the discovery now ascribed to him may be said to be a first and not an inconsiderable step towards his becoming a new man. He arrived at his magnificent mansion, not thinking as much of the infallibility of his own opinions, or, indeed, of himself, as hitherto he had been in the habit of doing. And here may we not pronounce him to be a second step on the road to a change of character?

His parish rector, the good and the treble-chinned (if that is possible) Doctor Bailey, awaited him in the library. The excellent ecclesiastic sat and talked some time: it is not said in expectation of the not unusual hint to adjourn to the parlour, where a sideboard was generally well laid out, in the evenings, with suggestions to supper. But Lord Lintern showed no symptom of stirring out of his magisterial arm-chair, and moreover seemed to take little interest in the profound gossip of his worthy visiter: and, at length, Doctor Bailey rose to take his leave, and just then recollected that he had a letter in his pocket for Lord Lintern.

"From whom?" demanded his lordship, admitting some interest.

About two months ago, the doctor answered, a person who had come, in an ill state of health, to settle in the parish, sent for him, gave him the letter in question, and requested him to take charge of it.

"And why had it been held back two months?"

"At the instance of the writer of it, who wished it to be delivered, according to its direction, only in case of his death."

"And he *is* dead, then?" demanded Lord Lintern.

"He was interred this evening," the doctor answered; and, having handed the letter to his admired neighbour

and friend, bowed, smiled, and took, altogether, a polite and gracious leave.

Lord Lintern opened the letter, and read as follows:—

"It is only within the last week that, by mere chance, I have discovered how nearly related to me the Earl Lintern is. Had I known the fact before, I would not have presumed to end my days within reach of his observation. But that is not the reason why I now write to you. This is the reason.

"By the help of law, lawyers, and money, you have succeeded in withholding from me my right. I will not affirm that you believe the right is on my side. On the contrary, however I may arraign your character and dispositions in other respects, I am sure that if your self-opinion and love of predominance allowed you to judge of facts as they stand, I should have had my own at your hands. However, your perseverance against me has beggared me and my son, and daughter, and, I am convinced, is killing me at last. When you get this letter, it will have done so. And, as you read it, suppose me addressing you from the grave while I add what follows.

"Although you *are* successful, I am wronged, and I shall die wronged. After my death my children will live wronged. Half of your present possessions has been mine since my birth, and it will be theirs, when I die, during their lives. Mine and theirs, in truth and right, though enjoyed by you and yours; so judge me, God, as my assertion is true or false! I am a Christian, you know, and I ask my future lot to be dealt out to me on that judgment.

"Your witness of the private marriage? He was a perjurer. Your entry in the parish register? It was forged, either by him or by some one else in his interests or in yours. Direct proof of these two facts I cannot give; that is to say, I cannot bring evidence of the witness's mind, nor yet of the act of forgery: but I know,—I know that both were what I now call them. I know it as clearly as a man could know a falsehood told of his own thoughts and actions at any given time and place where he was not; and, I repeat, to perjury and forgery I and mine are victims.

" But now, do not for the very last time misconceive me. Again recurring to the make and material of your character (though you and I have never been good friends together), I pronounce my conviction that you are no party to the double fraud. I pronounce my conviction that, even after its occurrence, the author or authors of it never communicated it to you. For, if they had, I am equally sure you would not have kept possession, to the ruin of me and my boy and my girl, of the property which it alone, under sanction of the sapient and baffled law, has conferred on you. In haughty indignation, if in no other spirit, you would long since have divested yourself of your borrowed trappings. Even your hate of us, — (if, beforehand, it did not vary from what it has been), your hate of us, your scornful hate, would contemn *such* a triumph. To trample us down at the voice of judge, jury, eloquent and pathetic advocates, an applauding court, newspaper paragraphs, and a sympathising world, — to do so, able to assure your own breast that, — no matter how literally and rigorously — you had the moral as well as legal right — *that* triumph I can understand to have been, and to be, most dear to you. But the other ! — No, I will not, I never did believe you capable of it. Your witness, I repeat, your hoary-headed witness, coined a story, for which, imposing it on you as truth, he knew he would receive a great reward ; and his hand, or hands procured by him, or other hands set to work by other heads, chiming in with his speculative villany, forged, — and most cleverly forged, I admit — the entry in the parish register.

" Farewell ! While I am rotting in my obscure grave, I ask you only to give this letter a patient perusal. One last word I have to say. My principles and feelings, religious and innate, urge me to say it : I shall die in no hatred of you. This moment I bear you none. Your ill-will towards me, I forgive : I can easily do so, because it has no grounds to rest on ; because it never has had. In asserting, according to the prescribed and every-day forms, my own and my children's rights, I have not, from the beginning, done so in hostility to you. You resented my endeavours in hostility, — in personal, bitter, devouring

hostility: that was the great mistake, which has indeed placed your foot upon the ashes of

"ROBERT MUTFORD."

Habitual incredulity to any thing that he *would not have* so, and long-indulged, and almost always successful imperiousness, at first enabled Lord Lintern to cast this letter from him, contemptuously, and assure himself it was a lying document. He rose hastily, and paced the room, frowning, and scoffing almost. He sat down again. The letter lay at his feet, open, and the name of "Robert Mutford," — of him who no longer had a name, — re-attracted his eye, and he grew calmer and more thoughtful. Untaught, unwilled, the character of the man who once bore that name, stood before his mind, and challenged investigation. Lord Lintern could not help feeling that, during all their contests together, straightforwardness had invariably distinguished the actions of his half-brother. The possibility of his posthumous assertions being true now stirred in his breast, and he grew more thoughtful. He took up the letter, began to read it again, and at the words, "suppose me addressing you from the grave," possibility became strong probability, and a slight shock of alarm passed through his mind and heart, — nay, he was aware of it, passing through his frame.

He continued his reperusal. He paused intently on the sentences, — "So judge me God, as my assertion is true or false! I am a Christian, you know, and I ask my future lot to be dealt out to me on that judgment." Arguing, not by his own convictions and feelings, but by what he indeed knew to have been those of the writer, Lord Lintern now almost yielded to certainty: and upon that, a sudden rushing-in of different recollections, all mixed together, produced, in his still badly balanced mind, an explosion of impatience, which for some moments scattered every reasoning power before it.

"If the letter spoke truth, here was Augustus's story of the dying declarations of the witness proved true! and, at least for repeating those declarations, his elder son was not a lunatic! — had not merited to have been treated as

such ! And yet, his father stood accountable to the world for having so treated him ! Curses confound the man who had pronounced on the boy's state of mind ! Eternal curses ! Could not the blockhead, or else the knave (he was one or the other) be punished for signing the certificate ?"

From the earnestness with which Lord Lintern thus strove to place all the blame on another, it was evident he felt something like remorse on his own account.

" Again, *if* the letter were true !" the despotic old man stamped, and clenched his teeth and his hands at the conviction which now arose — " he *had* been enjoying the fortune of another ! he *had* been drawing place, and power, and luxury from it ! and that other, his detested enemy !" he imprecated fearfully in a loud voice, yielding to all his long-cherished hurry of temperament, which, as it had often overmastered others, now overpowered himself.

A third time he snatched at the letter, and went on with it. Its general tone, and some of its remaining sentences, gradually stole new thoughts and feelings over him. First, his pride and vanity were soothed by the downright disbelief of the writer, that *he* could have acted fraudulently. From a declared enemy, that, at least, was gratifying. Declared enemy ? he unconsciously asked himself ; and he continued to make out a case against his own proposition. Robert Mutford had never *declared* that he was so. Now, in his letter, written on the crumbling verge of the grave, he declares, on the contrary, that he had never borne hatred : and if any assertion of the letter were true, so must be every other. Lord Lintern leaned his cheek upon his hand, and pondered, till his soul was sad, and bitter, and dark within him. The picture of a man ruined and killed by his agency, or partly by his agency, professing good-will and forgiveness towards him in his dying moments, arose before his thoughts, and tamed him. Presently, as if he had been regarding the picture in a magic mirror, two other figures began faintly to appear ; those of the son and the daughter of his dead half-brother : and he shrank, conscience-stricken, from the desperate scowl of Michael Mutford, as he pointed to Bessy, kneeling in the agonies

of shame and fear at his feet. And yet another figure finally broke through the shadows behind, — that of her youthful destroyer, bending towards the miserable brother and sister, with a cold, faint leer of derision ; of successful, premeditated villany ! and, mixed with his ever-ready impatience, Lord Lintern felt indignant anguish that *his* son, and his favoured son, should have wilfully perpetuated in his succeeding generation the wrongs which *he* himself had but unconsciously heaped upon Robert Mutford.

And — Augustus, again ! Augustus, sitting that moment, in his temporary mad-house, with no society but the village surgeon and his keepers ! It was all one subject. He, and the Mutfords, and his daughter Ellen, too, now banished for months to live, as she might, under the domestic tyranny of her disappointed maiden aunt, in Wales ! She, as well as Augustus, and every one else, had suffered wrongfully, *if— if* ——

Lord Lintern drew his desk close to him, and wrote the following letter to his law-agent in London : —

Sir,

Particular circumstances have lately led me to think that the entry in the parish register, which chiefly gained us the last decisive verdict at our trial at bar, is a forgery, and I commission you to have it reinvestigated with the utmost possible attention and severity, in the direct view of enabling me to divest myself of the acquisition of property it has conferred upon me, if, indeed, it should turn out to be what I strongly suspect it is. Your answer will be anxiously expected by, sir,

Your obedient servant,
LINTERN.

Having sealed this note, and committed it to the hands of a servant for transmission to the post, Lord Lintern retired to his bedchamber, avoiding, contrary to his invariable custom, the temptations of the sideboard in the eating-room, and substituting for, — perhaps — a bottle of champagne, of white hermitage, or even stout sherry, a glass of pure water.

Scarce aware of the act, before lying down to sleep, he drew aside one of the window-curtains, and looked towards the old-fashioned green-house, which had been converted into a legalised prison for his elder son. Light shone through the little iron-barred window of the room where, as he knew, Augustus sat, reading, writing, or silently or pensively braving his lot: "though," his father continued thinking, "not furiously, of late, they tell me; nor, indeed, since his recapture in town, now upwards of four months ago; and I can observe, myself, that, in his daily walks out with his keepers, his face, step, manner, and whole expression are altered for the better. And why — supposing my wretched boy not a lunatic, and only influenced by the changes of his horrible malady — why more tranquil and rational now, than he has been in the early stages of coercion? — The village Esculapius speaks of his always poring over good books, commanded, in chief, by a Bible —pho!" — and with his habitual sneer at every thing he *would* not credit, Lord Lintern tried to dispose himself to rest for the night; but a heavy sigh soon followed his sneer; nor was it quite unconnected with the subject of that very sneer.

His sleep was unsound. Many hours of the night he spent awake; and the intervals of comparative rest were filled with dreams of such a character as had never haunted him before: afflicting, touching, softening dreams, made up of their own wayward reassociations of the events and the thoughts of the whole day. He awoke, a more reflective and less audaciously proud man. And his first waking reflections turned to Augustus and his books; and he did not now sneer, but sighed again. — "A second time supposing him not mad, *can* such studies change the violent and dangerous nature I know he once was a slave to?" — asked Lord Lintern: — "Robert Mutford, too? what can have conferred upon *him* the unaffected power of writing to me, in sincerity, such a letter as he has written? — He also talks of —— tut, tut:" — the old man, who had really never investigated one side or other of the question upon which his thoughts now ran, but, through youth, manhood, and age, had contented himself, at second hand, with

theories which best suited the uncurbed indulgence of his temper and dispositions, still disdained to believe that others could be benefited by different theories. And yet, as he descended to breakfast, he internally called it very strange that his mind should suddenly summon up the person of Mr. Snow, with his benevolent and luminous smile, his at least soft and soothing voice, words, and manner, and his zealous, though not ostentatious doctrine of forgiveness of one another in the names of charity and of love.

Two letters awaited him on his breakfast-table. The first he took and opened was from his eldest daughter. He shook in every limb as he read it. It gave, with moderated expressions of sorrow and mortification, an account of the elopement to the Continent of his second daughter, in company with the husband of the lady under whose roof both his daughters were staying. It commented on the unfeeling and ungrateful step, as one taken in the view of mere self-gratification, without any anxiety for the inconvenience it might throw in the way of the writer, at least for some time, with respect to her own establishment in the world. And a postscript added, that although Lord Lintern had on former occasions objected to the addresses with which a certain younger son had honoured his eldest daughter, it might not now, that is, under the present unexpected circumstances, seem inexpedient to reconsider the subject, particularly as the gentleman continued attentive, and professed himself satisfied with the fortune already at the fair writer's disposal, by virtue of her mother's will, even though Lord Lintern might still object, and think fit to leave his daughter otherwise unprovided for. In fact, to spare herself the excessive pain of a renewed refusal from her dear and honoured father, Lady Georgina Allen wrote the present letter, upon the eve of the morning when she was to become a wife — with the aid of a special licence.

The second letter was from a gentleman of whom Lord Lintern had heard, though they were personally unacquainted. It bore the Paris post-mark, and ran thus: —

My Lord,

I am greatly grieved to be compelled to address you on the subject of this letter, but my prospects in life, if not

my existence along with them, are at stake. At play, here, I have lost nearly every shilling I possess in the world, and not lost it fairly. Improper practices have been detected on the part of certain persons against whom I played; the police are in possession of the proofs in my favour. I do not wish to proceed to the extremities of open exposure if possible; I ask only that the gentlemen in question may refund, and all shall be passed over. Among them, I am pained to mention your younger son, the Hon. George Allen, and I write to you in the hope that your timely remonstrance with him may protect the name of Lord Lintern from any shade that otherwise may be cast upon it. He has left Paris, and, it is thought, is in England by this time. Of course you will have a speedy opportunity of conferring with him. I await the honour of your Lordship's reply, and am, &c.

The effect of both these letters upon such a mind as Lord Lintern's would, at all times, have been great; in his present situation it was something terrific. Previously humiliated he had been, and had half owned himself to be, in consequence of mistakes committed; and he had made the partial acknowledgment without much difficulty, balanced as it was by vanity flattered, and pride and haughtiness aroused into a determination to correct his false steps. His greatest error, too, had consisted in believing himself hated by persons who did not hate him; who, at the least, would have borne him good-will, and acted fairly and justly by him, had he allowed them the opportunities. The new cases before him wore a very different aspect. He had mistaken again, but in a way insufferably mortifying to his notions of his own infallible judgment of persons and characters. He had mistaken indifference, eked out by self-interest, for sincere attachment; he believed himself loved where he must have been despised. He had mistaken accomplished suavity and mannered decorum in his two elder daughters, and new-fangled stolidity, if nothing else, in his son George, for good and pure principles, and a fixed sense of honour. And upon these mistakes he had built up, high and imposingly, to his own mind, triumph in his

seemingly successful direction of their spirits, much of present *éclat* reflected from them, towerings of ambition for the future, extension and perpetuation of rank, reputation, name. And where now was the all he had so built up? Almost fiendish tears filled the old man's eyes, as, tearing the letters in atoms, he ground them under his heel, and asked them to tell—"where!"

Unqualified detestation of his family took possession of him. And at first the friends for whom the reader is interested were included in Lord Lintern's anathema.

His late slight change of feeling towards them flitted away, and they reappeared to his distempered mental regards in all their former provocations to hatred and hostility. No — he would not be duped into trusting in a single human being. Every creature with whom he was connected, directly or indirectly, plotted against him. Robert Mutford's posthumous letter was again false: a mere canting, hypocritical, and well-conned appeal to his credulity: a last effort for revenge; revenge beyond the grave. He would instantly countermand the instructions he had yesterday written to his solicitor. "Ay," he cried aloud, his passion making him momentarily even a worse man than he has yet appeared to us to be —"Ay, were the lie a truth — were that possible — 'tis for them to show it — 'tis for them to reinvestigate and scrutinise, and pay money for the purpose, *now* — yes — *money, money for the purpose* — so, let them, — *now!*"

"Now?" asked something in his heart, in spite of him; "and why now, that is, to-day, if not yesterday? —it is not they who have stabbed at me since; it is not they — oh God! if God there be that hears me — it is not they who have made me the most wronged, outraged, and deserted and lonely man upon the face of the hateful earth, this morning!" A tear, but, in a degree, a softening one, found its way as he dashed down his face upon his out-spread hands, and his mind ran on in new associations. "Emily, Emily!" his wife's name, who had died giving birth to his youngest daughter and youngest child; "if you were alive now, would *you* too deceive, despise, and abandon me? Can you, *can* you attend to

my wretched words, Emily?—Emily, my youth's friend, who, till your last breath, I believe and hope — no, no, I fully believe it — never did me wrong, never gave me a moment's pain? — Emily — you, who, if you had but lived, could have saved me, I do think, from my since-acquired dislike of mankind? — you, for whose gentle sake I once was gentle? And oh, perhaps you could have saved others, too, for me, and me from them! Our miserable children, Emily, perhaps, under your hand, they would not be what they are! Perhaps it is I who have taught them haughtiness, and coldness, and hardness of heart! — Emily, Emily, *can* you hear me? Do you, in some modification of being, still exist to do so? You often told me, when I only laughed at your preaching, that there *is* an after-life, and that, if you should pass into it before me, you would, from its bourne, ever keep your mild eyes fixed upon me here on earth; and have your words proved true? and—I ask it again and again — do you now hear my question? — would *you* also forsake me, if you were still alive, in this detested life?"

Lord Lintern arose from the table where his face had lain on his hands, walked slowly to a desk, unlocked it, took out a written paper, and read it aloud, but in a weak and sometimes faltering voice. It was a prayer for her children and for him, which the good wife he had just invoked, had secretly composed and committed to writing, a few hours before her death, and he had found it in her hand, after she had breathed her last mortal breath — the hand extended to him for a long farewell. The prayer was the prayer of a pure-minded, wise, and Christian woman; and in an affecting strain of simplicity, it besought God to enlighten the mind of her beloved husband, to the end that he might believe, with a full conviction, and so be qualified for bringing up the young children, whom she then left motherless to his care.

Seriously, most seriously, Lord Lintern read the little document over and over again. If it produced no belief, (and we cannot expect that it should have done so,) it awakened the next most desirable sentiment — a *wish* to believe. He arose to replace it where he had found it —

in his deceased wife's Bible. He saw her name, written by her own hand, in the title-page. He turned over the leaves in an absent manner, and many of her marks and annotations appeared in the margin of the volume. He held it open, and involuntarily began reading the Sermon on the Mount. He continued till he had ended it, his mind gradually becoming attentive and absorbed. Repeating to himself — "beautiful" — more than once, he put up the little manuscript and the book, and sat down thoughtfully.

His mind became filled with a thousand imperfect resolves, wishes, and speculations. Again, it would be unnatural to suppose him convinced on the great abstract question; and yet, again, he felt an increased yearning to be so. "Delusion or not," he said, "I will try to gain it." But other more vivid subjects agitated him. Robert Mutford's letter, his son Michael, his daughter — little Bessy; Augustus, his own son; Ellen, his own daughter; could they, or any of them, be brought to care for him yet? That is, supposing, a second time, that they too had not all wronged him, and planned against his honour, peace, and happiness.

Very soon afterwards he was walking towards the sea-coast village. At the house of the overseer, there he paused, and demanded of Mr. White if any intelligence of the destination and lot of the young Mutfords had resulted from late enquiries. Receiving an answer in the negative, he continued his way, scarcely intending it, to the parish church. It was Sunday. He looked at his watch to ascertain if it was church hour, saw that it was, and entered the lonely churchyard.

But it had not been his intention to pass into the church itself. A vague inclination took hold of him to observe, stealthily, the sight of Robert Mutford's grave, in order to determine — should circumstances permit him — or, as he explained it to himself, call upon him to superintend the erection of a monument over the remains of his half-brother. From a remote spot his eye rested on the yet fresh-earthed grave. "And was he not my enemy indeed, who now rests in that obscure nook?" This ques-

tion started a train of serious and saddened reflection, and for some time he stood still where he was.

The organ, accompanied by almost a shout — though a harmonious one — of young, shrill, clear voices, suddenly burst forth in the church. The emaciated old man — the so long emaciated in mind and heart, as well as body — thrilled, as if he were a boy, filled in every vein with fresh and rushing blood. His eye turned to the open door; then, as if he were ashamed or afraid of his half-formed intention, glanced round the churchyard. No one observed him. He walked to the porch, entered it, and, without being seen from within, stood where he could hear whatever was hymned or said.

The organ and the young village choir ceased. There was a pause, only disturbed by the slight noise of persons adjusting themselves in their seats, as if making preparations to be unusually attentive. Presently a man's voice, full, soft, and most impressive, sounded through the hushed assembly. Lord Lintern thought he should know that voice; and yielding to curiosity if to no better impulse, he stepped noiselessly from the porch into the nearest vacant seat, and looked towards the pulpit. He had conjectured aright. It was Mr. Snow who began to preach; the good Dr. Bailey often yielded to his request to do so, during his occasional visits from town to the sea-side.

Lord Lintern *felt that he felt* glad of this occurrence. He listened without any imperious predetermination to sneer. The sermon was a diffusive illustration of a doctrine hinted at by the preacher during his peace-making visit to the old nobleman's mansion, and which, at the time, his lordship called drivelling, at the least, since the irresistible personal impression of Mr. Snow scarce allowed him to call it hypocritical cant. Upon this occasion, however, he did not even visit it with his former definition. He said to himself, that if it could stand good in the general breast, and to the common nature of man, *if it were true*, it was magnificent. But he denied its truth. His system of metaphysics denied it: his, and that of Mr. ——, the very last new writer on the portion of man's indentity which is not absolutely material. No! beautiful, bewitch-

ing as it seemed, it could not be. This he continued saying, at almost every pause the preacher made; until, towards the end of the sermon, he surprised himself with this sudden doubt; — " Yet, in Mr. ——'s system and mine, there is certainly not a word about *heart*, or about whatever it is to which all mankind, from constant and long experience and observation of themselves, have agreed to give that name: and in this system there *is* — though, indeed, the popular word I have used before does not find a place in it either: let me try and make it out more distinctly; 'tis certainly new."

But Lord Lintern mistook. Mr. Snow's system was by no means new. It was at least as old as that which his Master had proposed, in perfection, and to which Plato, Socrates, and the other apostles of antiquity, before the Coming, had borne splendid though not as consummate testimony. And Mr. Snow and all those who, as he asserted, had taught it to him, proclaimed it older still. Older than — (except ONE who preached it) their discovery of it. Older than man's first birth, or the calling into order, out of chaos, of man's world. Older than all things — before all: and to be after, all: Eternal; The Truth.

Nor was it difficult of comprehension: nor, for mere definition, did Lord Lintern think, on his coming out of church, that day, it required many words. " This," he said to himself, " I conceive it to be. Man's nature, identity, three distinct portions; body, mind, and a something else, to be called by any technical name we like, but, actually, an impartation of the nature of Him who, it is contended, created man. And that third portion, capable, if permitted to assert itself — if not neglected, to the exclusive cultivation and indulgence of the two other portions, — capable of making man, even in his present state, very happy; and very good, of course, because very happy. — *An impartation of Him who, it is asserted, created us,* — God. God, whose essence is — necessarily, indisputably, if at all He *is* — pure love. An impartation, then, of pure love, responding to God, and to all men; because all men equally possess it in themselves: and to all nature, all creation, conceived and called forth in the same spirit of

true love. Eternal, since—*if*—its source be eternal: essentially eternal; and as essentially immortal: that is, outliving mind and body: —*my Emily's future life.*"

Lord Lintern continued deeply absorbed on his homeward walk. His thoughts assumed a new direction.

"Ay; but look at man, in all countries, in all times: has he given any reasonable proof that his nature is so compounded? so happily? so goodlily? — What pure love has man ever shown for man? — whence come the dagger, the sabre, the roaring cannon, the scourge, the tomahawk, the rack, the sap, the mine, the dungeon of old, the modern gaol — and the modern debtor's gaol too; and the modern Bridewell; nay, the wretched parish workhouse? — of man's love for man? of the reciprocity of a spring of pure love of each man for the other, silently welling in every bosom? — No; no, the system, glorious as it is, is but a glorious vision; it has never been proved, and therefore —"

Lord Lintern's logical mind interrupted itself, to ask of itself — "And, therefore, *what?* — never *can* be proved? —is that so absolutely certain? capable of demonstration? —A very part of the doctrine inculcates the necessity of attending less to the unbridled workings of the two other portions of man, and more to this third portion, in order to its more ample and general developement; and has man yet done so? Supposing him to begin, at last, to do so, and to continue watchfully and fitly, am I, until the result of the experiment appear, entitled to my sweeping conclusion?

"It *may*, then, be true: that is, true of all men, as regards their nature and capabilities; of some, it is shown— asserted, at least, to be true. Of the ancients, mentioned to-day by the preacher; of their Successor — the Author of the Sermon on the Mount; of all his immediate followers; of many since, Fenelon among the number. Of Mr. Snow himself, I will contend, if true of mortal man: of my own Emily! yes, if true of human creature! —— True, perhaps," he continued, a crowd of other thoughts and feelings now interrupting the steady march of his reasoning — "of Robert Mutford, perhaps, true; the key to his letter, and to the feeling that could inspire it —

could make it natural — possible: and my son, Augustus, has been (if not a madman—which shall soon be proved) attending, now for months, to the discovery of this truth in himself? — and Ellen has long been Mr. Snow's pupil; what will it produce in them? — Certainly, though strictly treated, Ellen never — I will say so, after all that's passed — never, except in befriending Augustus, behaved to me unlike a kind daughter, in word, act, or look. I will write her word to come home; and her old Planche shall bear her the letter. I will look close at her again. Besides, unless she indeed merit banishment from me, her aunt's roof cannot prove comfortable to her. Perhaps she may yet be a daughter to me — though an only one. Though, if *the forgery has* not *been committed*, I shall have much to forgive her: and I will: even living on in scepticism of her beautiful doctrine, I may be able to practise some of its precepts. And I will examine it more closely, in all its bearings. That shall be the preparation of my mind, for the result — whatever it is to be — of my last letter to London. I should like to see Mr. Snow again in my house." — And here Lord Lintern started, as, raising his eyes, he saw Mr. Snow close before him.

He had bent his steps towards the post-office of the village, intending to take advantage of being near it, to ask personally for his letters, an unusual thing with him. Mr. Snow, on the same intent, had gained it some moments before, and, with his back to Lord Lintern, was in the act of glancing over a letter that had just been handed to him, and which seemed to interest him very much. Lord Lintern, though wishing to address him, would not do so for the moment that he seemed so much engaged; nor could he advance to demand his own letters at the post-office window, because Mr. Snow stood close before it, hastily perusing the lines he had that instant received. In this situation, his eye, unwilled by him, rested on the open letter in Mr. Snow's hands: he thought the writing much resembled his daughter Ellen's; he looked at the bottom of the third page for the signature; it was hers. He turned off hastily from Mr. Snow, glad that the reverend gentleman had not noticed his presence, and now suddenly

giving up all thoughts of saluting or entering into conversation with him.

Lord Lintern, in a relapse of his habitual impatience and *hauteur*, was jealous of Mr. Snow's correspondence with his banished daughter, while to him she had never written since her retirement into Wales. True, he had forbidden her to do so; but he would not weigh that point; on the contrary, he made it, by association, tell against her. If he had desired her not to send letters to him, he had laid upon her the same injunctions with regard to every other person; in fact, he had interdicted her from the use of pen, ink, and paper, while living under her aunt's roof; and now his own eyes gave him proof of her undutiful disregard of his wishes and commands. The despot swelled again in the old man's breast. He chafed equally against his daughter and her correspondent; he called him a wheedling and meddling priest; and he imprecated in a lordly manner to himself, that it was very much to be wondered at, and lamented, that the private affairs, and the private feelings of a family — of father and daughter — could not be kept sacred from such interference.

When he thought that Mr. Snow must have retired from the post-office, and gone out of sight, Lord Lintern returned to demand his own letters. One was given to him. The direction was in the old-fashioned handwriting of his maiden sister. He opened it on the spot, and it did not soothe his present mood. It informed him that, after a sojourn under the writer's roof, of which not a day nor hour was unmarked by obstinacy and a most refractory disposition, Lady Ellen Allen had stealthily eloped, no one knew whither. And thus she had repaid months of the most devoted attention, affection, and watchfulness — in fact, a literal observance of the system laid down by her father, Lord Lintern, for her treatment. The writer was convinced that she must have been assisted in her sly elopement, and should not wonder if there was a lover in the case. Lady Ellen could not have arranged, alone, and without money, to disappear so suddenly and so effectually: besides, without the inducement of a lover, what could cause her to dislike the elegant retirement of

her aunt's most picturesque residence, and the soothing care which she invariably experienced in it? Upon other grounds, this conjecture seemed strengthened. As Lord Lintern had been previously informed, the heir of the richest proprietor in the shire did Lady Ellen the honour to solicit her hand; a young gentleman of morals and probity, if not very remarkable for personal, or what were called mental accomplishments; but Lady Ellen persevered in her first unceremonious and scarcely civil rejection of him; and though he visited them every day, could not be brought to receive him with the necessary courtesy. And again Lord Lintern's sister asked of him—what but a preoccupation of her feelings by some other suitor, and doubtless some less worthy one, could lead her so pertinaciously to reject the heir of the richest proprietor in the shire, and a gentleman who would certainly be in parliament, and who stood an exceeding good chance of a title? The writer reiterated her first opinion; nor would it in the least surprise her if Lady Ellen Allen had gone off with the very person in the world whom Lord Lintern would wish to protect her from. Of this there was no positive proof, indeed; yet, from many conversations between the writer and her, it seemed very likely that Lord Lintern's youngest daughter had more than once met the person in question, previous to her visit to Wales;—not that she had ever admitted as much; but his name was constantly in her mouth, along with profuse, if not indecorous, expressions of compassion and sympathy for him; and above all, allusions to his care-worn and wretched appearance before his time,—nay, to the tones of his voice, so saddened and so touching, from constant and premature sufferings, as Lady Ellen, when put off her guard by the seasonable and necessary remonstrances of her anxious aunt, was in the habit of saying; and how could she describe his person, and his voice, if they had not met, and frequently met? Nay, how could she describe them, in the expressive and peculiar way she did, if those frequent meetings had not inspired her with more, much more than ordinary compassion for her half-cousin, Michael Mutford?

Lord Lintern, in his heart, had called his maiden sister a fool upon all former occasions that she had occurred to his mind, which, indeed, were not many, nor did they ever happen without setting him a-yawning. Now, however, she was his oracle. Her conclusions seemed wisdom's self. None but women can judge closely and truly of women; and, however absurd in other questions, in this they are downright sagacious. With Michael Mutford, then, his youngest daughter had incontestably eloped; and, under this impression, Lord Lintern's feelings will be imagined.

"And how eloped! in what character! as his wife? even that would be a curse—an eternal curse, and revenge enough for Mutford. But no! he will take a better revenge! having it to his hand, how can he refrain from it! Not weighing his whole life of burning hatred against me—evinced at his sixteenth year, I believe, in the letter he dared to write me—not weighing that—it is enough to say that he will take the revenge of retaliation! retaliation for the scene of the other day, in my justice-room, when he saw his designing and depraved sister at my feet! Ay, I put my trust in him! I doubt him not!

"And now, *now*"—added Lord Lintern, as his mind looked all around him—"now, at last, am I not a happy and honourable father!"

"That preacher!" he resumed, after a moment's pause—and yielding to a sudden resolve, he enquired at the post-office Mr. Snow's residence in the village, and having ascertained it, walked thither rapidly, thundered at the door, and was ushered into the presence of the person he wanted to see.

Mr. Snow was advancing to meet him with his usual polished urbanity, but stopped short at the almost shocking expression of his visiter's face and manner. Indeed, Lord Lintern's words, and the tone in which he pronounced them, would have been enough to startle him.

"None of that now, sir, I pray," he began, alluding, with a bitter sneer, to Mr. Snow's gentle and smiling prelude to a kind greeting—"none of that now, sir—— My daughter!"

"My lord?—Lady Ellen?"

"Yes, sir, that is the name of *the* daughter I have come to enquire after, at your hands."

"At my hands, Lord Lintern?"

"Tush, reverend sir; and tush, to myself"—muttered Lord Lintern, "have I been fool enough to suppose he will admit the receipt of her letter? Nothing, sir—nothing—good day, and I pray you to excuse me."—He was leaving the room.

"Stay, Lord Lintern, stay," said Mr. Snow, earnestly, and much affected; "since you have come to see me, do not leave me so soon; you *have* come, in great agitation; and you demand information of your youngest daughter at my hands;—do, now, I beseech you, hear me; whatever information I *can* give, you shall receive, readily—most readily, and with the most sincere pleasure."

"I thank you, sir, and we shall see that. Have you received a letter from her this morning?"

"I have, indeed."

"Giving an account of her clandestine elopement from her aunt's house?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Snow, without hesitation.

"Well, sir;" Lord Lintern paused; he was reconciling himself to the frankness upon which he had not counted, and trying to think better of Mr. Snow for it, and also of the whole subject in discussion. "Well, sir," he resumed, "and does Lady Ellen Allen further deem fit to impart to one so deeply in her confidence, why she has taken such a reputable step?"

"Yes; she fully explains her motives."

"And is her confidant at liberty, in his own conscience, and in his own peculiar notions of right and wrong, to communicate her explanation, at second hand, to her own father?"

"Certainly, Lord Lintern, I conceive myself quite free to satisfy you on this head."

"I am grateful to you and to her, sir. Pray have the condescension to go on."

"Lady Ellen thought herself warranted in leaving a house which did not protect her against the almost hourly attentions of a man whom she could not love—nay,

respect; and who lately began to address her not very graciously;" in using the last word, Mr. Snow expressed, perhaps too mildly, his young correspondent's feelings as to her rich suitor's demeanour.

"Good, sir; very good! Was this her only motive?"

"Her chief one, certainly. Without it, she declares she would not have left her aunt's house, although often tempted to do so by the restraint in which she lived—the cheerless seclusion—and, as she conceived and felt, the not affectionate manners of her aunt to her."

"And she had absolutely no other motive or motives, Mr. Snow?"

"She does not mention any other or others to me."

"And do you think she would have mentioned them had they existed?"

"I do, indeed."

"Why are you so sure, sir?"

"Because, to suppress them, in a letter professing to give me all her motives, would have been, though not palpable falsehood, a species of equivocation; and of no species, of no shade of equivocation, Lord Lintern, is your youngest daughter capable."

"What a youthful paragon! And thanks to you, sir, for making her so."

"I have not made her so, dear Lord Lintern. Nature made her so, as—capable of being so—Nature has made us all."

"A fine theory, Mr. Snow; but I have heard it before, and at length, to-day, though, as you may remember, I once gave you few hopes of going to church to sit out a sermon of yours."

Mr. Snow slightly started, and looked anxiously at Lord Lintern, whose eyes were averted; but after a moment's observation, he, too, turned away his regard, sighing profoundly: he did not, however, do full justice to his visiter's breast; for, although the cold sneer remained on his lip, Lord Lintern was experiencing, at that instant, a passing twitch of self-accusation for the taunt he had uttered. In spite of his present mood, all the events of that morning, down to the moment of his going to the post-office, as

well as of the previous day and night, had sunk into him deeper than even he would admit to his own mind.

After a short silence, he went on.

"Pray, Mr. Snow, did Lady Ellen Allen leave her aunt's house *alone?*"

After a moment's hesitation, Mr. Snow answered — "No."

"And in what kind of company, then?"

"In reputable company, Lord Lintern, fit and capable of protecting her."

"Oblige me by naming her kind protectors, or protector."

"On that point, my dear lord," said Mr. Snow, as frankly as he had made his former admissions, "on that point, I pray you to excuse me."

"Ha! I thought so. And why, on that point, are you to be so readily excused, sir?"

"Lord Lintern, you know that in removing your daughter to Wales, you commanded her not to return to your own roof without your own permission; that you assured her, if she did so, your door would be closed against her: she now fears, that you may continue to refuse her your personal protection; that, still, your door is to be closed against her; and that, if informed of her present place of refuge, you will compel her to return to a roof where — where, in fact, as a lady, as a woman of honour, she thinks she has been insulted by a man with whom she can never join her lot in life: for these reasons, she requests me (until you allow me to speak more on the subject, which I hope and pray you may have the kindness to do) to conceal the name of her new friends. But, Lord Lintern, I beseech you let me go on; for, in a few words, I am about to say all *the more* which will be necessary — only authorise me to inform her that you will give her an asylum in your own house, and she will hasten, not only dutifully, but gratefully, and most delighted to recross its threshold."

"Excellent diplomacy, sir, between a father and a daughter. And this prostration of parental and rational authority, Mr. Snow, you and your pupil expect me to

make, before I can be indulged with an account of the kind of protection under which my youngest daughter has chosen to place herself? And, in order to make allowance for her elopement from my sister's house, I am to believe the story of that sister having permitted her to be insulted in that house?—and, if all this I do not, she is to stay where she is, hiding from my eyes, and from those of the world—though not from *my* thoughts nor *its* tongue, sir; and you would advise her to just such a course of conduct, Mr. Snow?"

"As yet I have advised her to nothing, Lord Lintern. Her letter of this morning is the first communication that has passed between us—the first information, indeed, I have had of the place to which you had removed her from your own house, since her sudden disappearance from among us, here, in your company."

"Indeed, reverend sir!" sneered Lord Lintern.

"Indeed, and in truth, my dear lord: though I own that my ignorance of how and where Lady Ellen was situated, gave me great uneasiness for the last six or seven months."

"Well, sir, believing all that, and also that you have not yet begun to advise her, allow me to repeat my question. Supposing that I do not fall into all the terms proposed at—let me see—between seventeen and eighteen years of age—by her wise, and prudent, and decorous ladyship—would you, in that case, advise her to continue where she is (*wherever* she is), and not return to the protection of her aunt?"

"I am a mere mediator, Lord Lintern, on this occasion; it is not my place to volunteer advice of any kind; but were Lady Ellen, under those circumstances, to ask my opinion, I certainly could not recommend her to expose herself again to the unworthy humiliations she has experienced."

"And you fully credit, then, her assertions that she has received cause from her young suitor to abandon my sister's home?"

"Fully, Lord Lintern: I repeat, I have the honour, and the heartfelt pleasure of assuring you that your young-

est daughter knows not what it is even to think an untruth."

"All very captivating, sir. And so, sir, I am answered, I presume. You positively decline to inform me where that daughter at present is, or with whom?"

"Under the confidence placed in me by her, my dear lord, I am bound to do so."

"Then, sir, one question more, if you please, only one. Have she and a certain young person—young Mutford, sir! Michael Mutford! Have he and she ever met, to your knowledge? in your company, sir! answer that, reverend sir."

Mr. Snow saw the results of his answering, but he did answer, at once, and as frankly as ever; "Yes, Lord Lintern, she and he *have* met in my company; but——"

"Enough, sir, add nothing; I know her, now, sir, and who is likely to be her present protector; and I know you, Mr. Snow! with your smooth cant, and your honied theories, sir, and after your sermon and all, I know you. A second time, I wish you a very good day." He hurried out of the room, Mr. Snow, not deprived of his self-possession, calling upon him, in vain, to stay and hear the circumstances under which his daughter and Michael Mutford had met in his presence.

Lord Lintern walked homeward, hastily. His eyes were fixed on the ground, and he never raised them to notice who passed him, although he was often conscious of persons saluting him in the village, and along the road beyond it, leading to his house. Thus absorbed, he was not aware that one individual, who seemed to have been waiting for him, half way between the village and his residence, on the most lonely part of the road, pulled off his hat to him in a marked manner, and when Lord Lintern took no notice, followed at a short distance behind, and by stamping heavily, strove to challenge his attention. At last the man came to his side, again pulled off his hat, and wished him good day, by name. Lord Lintern then turned round, and recognised the emancipated *ci-devant* adorer of Lucy Peat.

"Pray leave me, sir; I have not time this moment

for any reconsideration of your business," said his lordship.

"Reconsideration of *that*, my lord? I be blowed if it bayn't well considered, already, out and out; Lucy quite the mistress at preacher Boakes's; only, folk say, he beats the worth of it on her sides, every hour in the day." And Sam, at no time a great respecter of persons, and at present high in his own opinion, by virtue of Mrs. Simmons's private hospitality, ever since an hour before church-hour that morning—Sam, it is asserted, grinned joyously, and almost confidentially, close by Lord Lintern's ear.

"Leave me, I say, sir, and let me hear no more of the subject."

"Not a word more, my lord, if preacher Boakes's hisself were to ax me. It bayn't on that business at all I make up to your worship; but I hear you've been making enquiries after young Mr. Mutford?"

"Well?—yes—well?" Lord Lintern stood still, and fixed his glittering eyes on Sam's large, grey, glassy cold ones.

"Your lordship would consider any one that could help you to find him, *I* know?"

"There—" He gave Sam a shilling.

"Obleeged to your lordship's worship; and Mr. Mutford will be likely to be at a place, in a night or two, where I saw him afore, some months ago: one Mr. farmer Linnock's house:" Lord Lintern started: "the rich farmer as your lordship sent Lady Ellen to, for the good of her health, you know."

"And you have seen him there, sometime ago, you say? How long ago? answer exactly."

"I be blowed, my lord, if I can take on me to say so very exactly, but I knows it was the time Lady Ellen was there."

"You are sure?"

"Bayn't *you*, my lord?"

"And why so sure?"

"'Cause I seen Lady Ellen and he, now I remember, a-talkin' together in the garden and orchard, now in one place, now in t'other."

"Talking together! more than once, then?—how often did he visit at the house?"

"Only for one visit, my lord; but that was a long un."

"Ay! but no matter about that. That's nothing—not the business. I am anxious to see Mr. Mutford, and you are sure he will be at Linnock's in a night or two? Very well; let me know the moment he arrives there, and I will pay you for your additional trouble; good day."

Lord Lintern gained his deserted and detested home, it is superfluous to say in what resumed hatred and hostility against all those whom a few hours before he had been re-inclined to consider in a possibly friendly light.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

VOLUME THE THIRD.

* * * * *

Michael Mutford had courageously declined a very princely offer of Mr. Lilly White, though, at the time, sorely tempted by his necessities, almost by his despair, to accept it, and, we may remark, not prepared by former habits of reasoning to consider its acceptance on his part morally criminal, or even poetically disgraceful. The abiding pride of a conscious gentleman, and, notwithstanding all his late snarls, or declamation, or innuendo against aristocracy, his family pride, too, supplied the only or the strongest motives for his refusal. Since so it was, that the world *did* look with a contemning eye upon the merchant who bought and sold at the best terms he could — certain laws of his country not much considered in his arrangements — Michael would not submit himself, his father and sister, his name, to such a criticism. And branching out of this sentiment were some peculiarly personal; such as a shrinking back from a charge which would bring him in constant proximity, if not to an equality and an intimacy, with individuals like the honest Lilly White, his brother, and the flippant and full-dressed Misses Linnock; to say nothing of the lower degrees of smugglers, male and female.

But his father's death, and his sister's and his own disgrace, wrung out of Mutford's breast all sensitiveness of family name and honour, and all care of acting with deference to either. His father could not now be made to blush by any contrivance of his to "get money:"— his sister and himself — and they were the last of their family — could not fall lower than they had fallen. He had no character to support in the world's regard: it would not now accord him the name of gentleman (gentleman!) — he laughed bitterly, in his bitter heart, and vowed to that

world to fling back the name of man, also, if it were to be held according to the common acceptation of its meaning.

Such, at least, were the conclusions of his distempered mind upon the day when he rode with Bessy, at the back of the stage, far away from the sea-side villages. And before he took leave of her in her new residence, Michael had resolved to come to a second explanation with Lilly White; and when he told her of a necessity for exerting his "*genius*," in a fit arena, in order to provide for their common wants, it was not play-writing or novel-writing he meant, as she supposed, but sailing in the prosperous and fortunate Miss Molly, in bold defiance of blockade men and revenue cutters, a good sea dashing and foaming, and a good breeze whistling and piping around him.

After burying his father, and repairing to his friend Graves's Temple-chambers, he swore, lying down in bed, that he would *pay* Graves's brother, and Graves's self, all the money he had borrowed of them — "and in an honest way, too;" and that "honest way" was, to his then state of mind, smuggling.

But, before launching on his new and laudable career, Michael had also made up his mind, as the letter (intended to have been posthumous) to Graves truly asserts, to follow the Honourable George Allen to the Continent.

His pains, and the partial loss of the use of his limbs, which his exaggerating and *triste* anticipations unhesitatingly pronounced to be irremovable, came on, and he gave up both intentions, and, with them, the wish to live. He had lain down in bed, — a pistol, crammed with powder and small bullets, in each hand, — self-sworn to destroy himself when the watchman under his chamber-window should call the hour of one o'clock. He was saved; and in such a manner that the demon of suicide fled, awe-stricken and terrified, out of his wretched heart, leaving it free to receive, in a sudden and stormy influx, love of his friend and of his sister, the Christian's fear of God, and the resolve of a still desperate man to live on.

He made terms with his friend, in his chamber in the hotel, sincerely resolved to keep them. Graves and he parted at six o'clock next morning; Mutford taking the stage to the sea-side.

"When you see your poor sister, Michael, in the village to which this stage will bear you, do not stir from her side," said Graves.

"I will not," answered Mutford, laughing to himself.

"And harkee," continued Graves, "to bribe you to be a good boy, perhaps in a short time I may have some news to send you."

"Of what nature?" demanded Mutford.

"Oh, that would be telling you the identical news itself, which I am not quite at liberty—in fact, which at present I will not do, Master Michael."

The stage drove out of London. Mutford pondered a moment upon Graves's hint, but speedily put it out of his mind, as a mere nothing,—a little friendly expedient to keep him anxious about an object, and so divert him from a relapse into former evil thoughts.

"But he need not fear me now. The pains have vanished, or nearly so; and why should I not, as a consistent, reasonable creature" (here came another of Michael's inward laughs) "fall back upon all the resolves of that night, before which they thought proper to seize upon me?—So—the Miss Molly a-hoy!—I only transpose my measures. My cousin George can wait awhile."

On the night to which he alluded, in this reverie, when his vows were vowed to swear faith to the bunting of the Miss Molly, whatever might be its colour or colours, or supposing it only the colour of plain, coarse linen, Michael Mutford, as a first measure, wrote a letter to a very slight acquaintance of his at the sea-side. Prudently calculating that Mr. Lilly White might not now have need of his services, he wished to avoid the unnecessary humiliation, or call it merely trouble, of a personal interview with that chief of homely name; and he therefore applied, by post, to his prime-minister, to sound Lilly on the subject, and have an answer ready for him in a night or two, when he would call on her—for *her* it was, to wit, Martha Huggett,—at her own house, or else send her a message to meet him in its neighbourhood. And, not knowing Martha's address, Michael consigned this epistle to the care of Mas'r Fox (and it may here be added that Sam Geeson's hint

to Lord Lintern of the great probability of Mutford becoming visible in Mr. Linnock's house, in a few nights, was derived from the whispers that soon arose about the nature of that letter, after its arrival at its destination).

Michael formed one of the seven *vis-à-vis* travellers at the back of the stage. His precisely opposite companion was a pretty girl, the lady's maid, probably, of some family from town, sojourning at the little watering-place to which the stage was rolling. She was as lively as pretty. His other fellow-voyagers, old, young, and middle-aged, were also not quite as morose, or as suspicious or fearful of one another as English stage-travellers generally are; but, for Michael himself, he was the very soul and spirit of the party; and the man preferred of the pretty girl's dark hazel eyes, and her most attentive squire into the bargain; for which, upon occasions of descending and ascending, during the journey, he boldly asked, and was not cruelly refused, some little tribute, at the back of the coach, out of view of coachee, and the other members of coachee's temporary family. And to his own ears, Michael's jest, and good things, and loud laugh, rang merrily all along the road, until he wondered at himself, and began to flout himself for certain former misgivings of his incapability of cutting a figure among any number of people: — but, what would he have felt if he could have known, afterwards, that the pretty girl, and others of his delighted audience of that day, often declared, in alluding to him subsequently, that they were sure he was some young lord from Oxford? (the question asked being of course only meant to apply to the limit of time during which his present fit continued on him.)

Outside the little sea-coast village, he descended from the coach. Evening had fallen. He repaired, stealthily, to Mas'r Fox's house. The door was secured; but lights streamed through the chinks of a window-shutter. He knocked, as Fox's titter, and that of some other person, came on his ear. All grew silent within. He knocked again; no answer. Suspecting a certain something, he peeped through the chinks of the window-shutter; no person was situated within range of his eye. Getting im-

patient, he now assaulted the door in good earnest, and called on Fox by name, giving his own. A monkeyish cry of joyful recognition escaped his old friend, who presently opened the door, holding it, however, ajar in his hand.

"Welcome home to us, Mr. Mutford; I be blessed but I be glad to see you, *I* know. Well, sir," he continued in a confidential whisper, "that old girl, as you knows about, sir, has the letter you sent her, according to all I hear from one o' the ——"

"Confound them," cried Mutford, "can't they keep a secret better between them? Let me in, Mas'r Fox: I must rest a moment here, while you go tell Martha I want to see her."

"Why, sir, Martha's mother's house bayn't so far off," hesitated Fox.

"And that 's the very reason why it won't take you long to go there. What! you don't like to let me in a moment?" Mas'r Fox still held the door in his hand.

"I be blessed if I don't, then, Mr. Mutford — but" — as he left the way free, Mutford passed him — "but the place be so small, sir, and all the young 'uns just gone asleep behind that curtain," pointing to an old counterpane suspended on a line, which veiled one nook of the one apartment that made up Mas'r Fox's whole house — shop, parlour, and kitchen by day, general dormitory by night — "and I be blessed if I ha'ant been forced to put them all asleep myself this night, and the last night, and more, Mr. Mutford; for my poor woman be gone on a little trip over to France, to buy French eggs for the shop; and after the last of 'em lay down, here I was sitting, as you see, sir, taking one little taste o' brandy and water, sir, that moment when I heard you knocking so loud, and holloring so."

"I see," assented Mutford, glancing at the little table, to which were *two* chairs, and which, along with the brandy-bottle, held *two* glasses, — "I see; and why should you not, Mas'r Fox? every man is surely entitled to taste the sweets of his hard earnings; and no more industrious little man than you do I know, to say nothing of your good, moral conduct, and your fear of the face of

Mr. Boakes ; — and — poor woman ! — gone to France to buy French eggs ? — and the poor little things left all alone to your care ?" — Mutford, for a reason, had been cautiously edging towards the suspended counterpane ; now he suddenly peeped behind it, saying, " Poor little dears !" and Fox uttered, under his breath, a " I-be-blowed !" — while Michael added, " And, I do protest, Mas'r Fox, a very fine girl of her age the eldest is," as at the same moment he took by the hand, and assisted to her feet, the comely, fresh-faced maiden, of whose acquaintanceship with the fly-charioteer mention has before been made, and whom Mutford now discovered sitting at the foot of the pallet, upon which lay, sound asleep, a brood of young Foxes, her back against the wall, and her knees crippled up into her mouth.

The little crabbed nature of Fox had a spark of spirit and quick temper in it, and, taken off his guard, he was about to yield to his mortification and spleen, and brazen and fight himself out of his present dilemma, as well as he could ; but Mutford speaking on without a pause, turned away his wrath.

" An amazing finely-grown girl, indeed, and does you and Mrs. Fox, rearing and all, uncommon credit. Eh, pretty dear ! — tell its name, won't it ? — there, to be sure it will — and not look as if it feared one were going to eat it, either ; — and how do you do, my precious ?" — Mutford caressed the child — " very well, you thank me ? There, there, sit down, and I will sit down with you, and while papa goes on a little errand for me you'll say your ta, ta, to me ; and I'll tell you pretty stories."

" Well," at length interrupted Fox, suddenly abandoning his anger and his gravity together, as he responded the girl's silly laugh — " well, if ever I see, or heard tell of ! — Mr. Mutford, ye be what you be — as knowin' a hand as I ever — well, no matter ; *I'll* say no more ; little said bes' soonest mended ; but ——"

" You 'll just run where I asked you, Mas'r Fox, without losing any more time — there, do ; and never mind me, here, me and the little ones ; I 'll take care of 'em for you."

"Jane," wavered Mas'r Fox, still grinning, and trying to catch her eye, which, by the way, Jane seemed not at present over-anxious to allow him to catch. "Jane, bayn't you a-coming for a run, too?"

"She!" answered Mutford, "at such a time of night? poor dear, no, indeed; better for her to sit still here, and keep quiet in-doors, and so much wind abroad, and, I think, rain coming on—eh, Jane?"

"You be *such* a funny gentleman!" tittered Jane; and, perforce, Mas'r Fox continued tittering too, with, however, alternations, for an instant at a time, of gravity and suspicion in his face; and, finally, at the repeated exhortations of Mutford to "skip!" the little fellow, after grinning coldly again, and saying, "Well, I see how it be; *I* see;—well;"—he set off in a quick run from his own door, his head poking down, his fists clenched, and his elbows squared, and jerking backward and forward in union with his motion and speed.

"Be quiet, now, sir, will you?" said the fair unknown to Mutford, immediately upon Mas'r Fox's departure: "hush! I be blessed if I should at all wonder if there goes Lucy Peat, and the constables after her:"—this was spoken in reference to a hubbub in the village-street, made up of loud talking, running feet, and the shrieks of a woman at a distance. Mutford's bitter-hearted, and even to himself absurd and fantastical levity, abandoned him.

"Lucy Peat?" he said, shuddering at her name, as he arose from the table, and stood in the middle of the small apartment.

"Yes, sir, Lucy Peat; the girl as was at service in your family, you know."

"I know;—and—constables after her!—why?"

His chance companion briefly related, that, "ever since Mr. Boakes had taken Lucy home, they did not agree the best in the world; so far from it, that they quarrelled each other night and day, cat-and-dog like; that Lucy had several times run out into neighbours' houses to save herself from his blows, though, when Mr. Boakes followed her to fetch her in again, he protested, in the mildest manner, that he had never raised a hand to her, much less his foot,

or the tongs, poker, or candlestick, as she averred; and that Lucy was only unsettled in her mind, and raved of all she said. However, so things went on between them, till this evening, a few hours ago, when Lucy ran out of his house for good, crying out like mad, in fore-right earnest, her eyes blackened, her head bleeding, and a dinner-knife in her hand; and when folk went in to see after poor Mr. Boakes, they found him very ill, indeed, from two great stabs in his side; and the doctor said he had little chance for his precious life."

Mas'r Fox returned from his mission, out of breath with haste, and the workings within him of many momentous interests. First, he had raced back as fast as he could, in order that Mutford and Mrs. Fox's friend might enjoy their *tête-à-tête* the shortest time possible; next, he had to deliver himself of Martha Huggett's instructions; and, lastly, he carried the latest tidings of Lucy Peat, having encountered the crowd who pursued her, and, notwithstanding his energetic hurry, heard enough, and asked enough of them to make himself master of all they knew, had done, and intended to do.

And of Lucy Peat he first spoke, railing at her atrocious attempt upon the life of poor Mr. Boakes in terms such as it merited, and giving his hearers to understand, that she had just been hunted out of a plantation in the neighbourhood, where she must have hidden herself some hours, and had now passed through the outskirts of the village, the constables and the crowd not very close upon her, however, and therefore not quite sure of her route; though, doubtless, she would soon be come up with, and secured.

Then Mas'r Fox took Mutford to the door, and whispered — "I be blessed, sir, if that ere old girl bayn't too sensible and on her guard of an odd time: what d'you think? she will give no downright answer, nor budge from her mammy's fire-side, nor let you go there to speak with her, if you don't send, first of all, a line in writing that will make her sure you be the very man she can and ought to appear to in the present business."

Mutford wrote on a slip of paper —

"Martha, my good girl.—By the flower-bed—the hole

in the wall—the black beard of our Lilly, and the white nob of the farmer, I am he." And this he sealed carefully and handed to Fox.

In a few moments the little (almost winged) Mercury galloped back, and again whispered in Mutford's ear—"All be right, sir: along the clifft."

"How soon?" demanded Mutford.

"Directly," answered Fox, his little grey eyes glittering towards the now sulky-looking damsel at the table, who, her fair cheek leaning on her hand, was contemptuously and unobservantly sipping a mere trifle of brandy and water.

"Are you sure?" again asked Michael:—he had noticed and understood the glance of Mas'r Fox, and doubted that his own personal comforts might possibly be sacrificed to a reasonable wish to get rid of him quietly. But Fox "blessed" and "blowed" himself many times over, if he did not utter the very instructions he had received; if, in fact, Mutford had a moment to lose, unless he wanted to keep "*that old girl* a-waiting."

"Good night, then, Mas'r Fox, and take care of the little uns, till the French eggs come home," said Mutford, as he left the house, laying his hand solemnly on the little man's shoulder, and glancing towards a third person.

"Oh, cum, now, cum, Mr. Mutford," grinned Fox, "you know you be putting upon me, this way—Jane, 't is time you were a-helpin' mother to put her own young 'uns to bed; for you see, Mr. Mutford, Jane's mother"—growing serious—serious *for him*—"Jane's mother just sent her across here——"

"I know it, well; good night!" interrupted Mutford; and running from the door, almost as fast as its proprietor had done, he was, in a few minutes, striding over the well-known shingles which lay under the steps that led to the gradually ascending path to the cliff.

Notwithstanding the absurd hurry in which, even according to a plan, he endeavoured to keep his mind engaged, his present situation, and every object around, tempted him, by degrees, into recurrences he had sworn to avoid. Arrived in view of the rude steps, he was at first surprised into a vivid recollection of the fate of poor Moffit, and his

eye wandered to the buttress from behind which had peered the legs of the observant man-of-war's man, who subsequently slew his polite old friend, and then to the point where the boats had come in, that memorable morning, and then to the spot where the victim of revenue-justice had fallen dead. Mutford stood still, and conjured up the whole scene: the Lieutenant and his men running down the steps; Sam Geeson, then seen for the first time, braving the blockade guard—Sam Geeson, the friend of Lucy Peat; Lucy Peat, the destroyer, or one of the destroyers of his sister!—here was the first forbidden link touched by the spark of association, and to the last link of the dark chain it then shot along. That last was his father's grave: his father's grave so near him, at this moment, and yet about to be passed by him unvisited, and about to be passed, perhaps, for the last time. Mutford turned his back on the sea-cliff, and walked rapidly in another direction.

The churchyard, to which he bent his steps, was at all times of the day and night to be entered by means of a turnstile gate. He was soon standing over the heap of fresh earth he sought. A minute after, he was on his knees, his arms encompassing it.

"Michael Mutford?" questioned a hard though low-keyed voice, close to him, after he had for some time indulged his feelings. He jumped up. A man muffled in a cloak stood directly opposite to him, on the other side of the grave.

"Yes, Michael Mutford," he answered; "and who calls him by his name?"

"One who has a right to demand of you—Where and how have you disposed of the Lady Ellen Allen?"

"Disposed of the Lady Ellen Allen?" repeated Michael, speaking very slowly—"disposed of *her!*" He broke into a laugh:—"Again I ask who stands there before me?"

"Her father."

"Ay!"—Mutford's foot was on his parent's grave, that, from it, he might spring on his hated enemy. He suddenly checked himself, and fell back some paces, saying—"Be gone! leave me! leave me here, alone! *here!* it is not *here* we should meet: it is not *here* you should come

to dare me! What brings you here? what!" he continued, losing command of his reason — "to shoot me on that spot?" pointing to the grave — "to stretch his son, there, while he lies below! or to tear him out of his last resting-place! to rob the grave of its poor tenant! You cannot sleep in your bed while even his bones ——"

"Patience, patience, sir," interrupted Lord Lintern; "none but a madman could assume that I come here on any such intents: this is not the language we should use to each other: patience, I say."

"Stop where you are!" Mutford broke in, in his turn: "on your life, do not stir a step!" Lord Lintern was about to approach him nearer — "*that* — *that*" — again motioning towards the grave — "*that* is between us *as* you stand; and if I will not cross it to *you*, do not you cross it, or pass it, to *me!* — Do not! — Leave me here alone, I say! or, since you will not — no, no!" — after a black struggle with himself of a moment — "no! I leave *you*, here alone! — 'tis better — 'tis better."

"Madman, indeed," muttered Lord Lintern, as Michael turned his back and ran out of the churchyard; and not many minutes had passed, before Mutford flung himself down upon the cliff path, a good distance beyond the village, where he lay panting and exhausted, over-wrought in body and mind.

A girl's voice, singing, at a little distance, and in a low key, made more imperfect by the dashing of the sea beneath him, and the hard blowing of the wind about him, aroused Mutford into observation. The singer evidently came nearer, for he could soon catch a few lines —

> "Oh, Melony, oh Melony,
> Thou art the fairest creature."

He lay still. Two girls approached, one almost a child: she addressed her companion, who had been singing, in a pettish tone, —

"I be blessed alive, Martha, if you bayn't been putting on me, all this while, about Bill; he never gave you no such messages for me, and I know he didn't."

"Come, my maid, come; don't you go for to be foolish, now," answered Martha.

"An', I wunt, then; and that's the very reason as why I be not a-going to let you make me a fool, no more: 'tisn't Bill, at all, I say; but some 'un you want to make up to, on your own account, Martha Huggett: an' so——"

"Jane, my maiden, don't go home, this time, at least; do stay beside o' me, do; and suppose I have a sweetheart, as well as you, Jane, and that we could come on 'em both together, or one after t' other, what harm 's in that, I be glad to know?—there's my pretty maid; do walk a bit on with me: I don't like coming out to see folk, alone, no more than you do, yourself, Jane."

"*I* never said as how *I* didn't," remarked Jane.—"But stop: who is sitting on the path?"

Mutford had half raised himself from his reclining position.

"Mine or yours, Jane?" questioned Martha; "come along, and let 's see."

She took the girl's hand, and approached Mutford. In coming close to him, she said, "Good night," in an indifferent voice; then let Jane go on a few steps, while she added, in a whisper, "The flower-bed?"

"And the hole in the wall," answered Mutford.

"Ask us the way to Mr. Linnock's, then." She tripped after her beguiled companion, humming—

> "'Tis all of these poor smugglers,
> Who now in gaol do lie;
> Their wives and children left at home,
> And fearing they must die."

Taking the hint, Mutford stood up, followed the two girls, overtook them, and made the enquiry which had been suggested to him. Martha replied that it was a good step to Mr. Linnock's house, for any one who did not know the short cuts across the fields, after turning away from the cliff. He said he was quite unacquainted with these short cuts, and asked her to describe them. She pretended to do so, in a clear manner; but when Mutford assured her he could not venture a foot of ground upon his comprehensions of her statistics, he only said the truth. Then came, naturally, his earnest request to be conveyed within view of the house by his present companions: his

business with Mr. Linnock he declared to be urgent: he was fatigued, as well as ignorant of the path-road; and, in fact, he would be very thankful for the favour he required.

Martha, after consulting Jane, and calling on her to say if either of them would think much of the walk, to oblige the civil gentleman, and getting a favourable answer, cheerfully agreed to guide Mutford to his destination. All then moved on together. Martha and Jane began to walk briskly: Mutford kept up with them with difficulty; and at last Martha perceived he was, indeed, fatigued, — so much so that his steps were uneven.

"Gentlemen bayn't used to lean on poor girls' arms," she then remarked — "though, in case of need, girls' arms might help 'em; — see, Jane, how tired he be; — and so, sir, here's one of mine for you, and this pretty maiden will give you another, *I* know."

Jane, tittering at the novelty, the importance, indeed, of her approaching situation, gleeishly, though sheepishly extended her little arm, bent tight at the elbow, and Mutford proceeded on his walk, supported, at either side, by her and Martha Huggett. He allowed, nay, urged himself to enjoy this little adventure, and talked in a good-humoured strain with his two guides.

In a strain of regulated good-humour, however, one not at all resembling that in which he had indulged with the pretty lady's maid on the top of the stage, nor with the yet nameless maiden at Mas'r Fox's. There was, in Martha's manner, even in her frankness and lightest prattle, something which prescribed a peculiar respect towards her. Little silly Jane Simmons was nobody: but were Mutford alone with Martha Huggett, in his most buoyant time of life, he could not have trifled with her, as young men will now and then do with village damsels.

Her character, so far as he knew it, by her conduct and actions, also had an influence upon him. Her devotion to her young Fred — ("Might he not have sung to her at parting," asked Michael of himself, sillily — yet characteristically —

> "My heart with love is beating,
> *Transported* ——"

and there stopped short :) — her respectable government of herself, with regard to other men, since he had been snatched from her ; and her determination to forsake her friends and country, in order to partake his lot in a remote land, and in, at least, a questionable situation : all this, a knowledge of which Mutford had derived from the worthy Mr. Linnock, put the girl in no common-place light before him. He felt that he should like to know more of his young friend Martha ; of the bases of her principles, in fact.

A little occurrence afforded him opportunity for partially gratifying his wish. As they passed near the edge of the cliff, which now was of great depth below them, Jane Simmons suddenly stopped an instant, and pointing down to the shingles, said, " There, Martha," expressively.

Martha as suddenly looked towards the spot whither her young friend pointed, and averting her head, answered, with a quick, short sigh — " Ay, Jane."

Mutford also looked, but saw nothing, though, in the clear moonshine which sheeted the sea and the shingles, he must have discovered any remarkable object. All passed on — and he asked — " What was that ?"

" Nothing, sir, nothing," replied Martha.

" Nothing *now*, sir," added Jane.

" But *was* there any thing there, when you pointed, my little maiden ?"

" No, sir ; only Martha remembers the spot so well."

" Nonsense, now, Jane Simmons." — Mutford, mistrusting the tone of her voice, peered into her eyes : there were tears in them. He came upon a certain conclusion, but, for some time, took no advantage of it. He waited till the sharp breeze blew right from Jane to Martha, and then said in a tone which the younger girl could not catch, — " It was there that poor Fred, along with others, had the row with the man-o'-war's men."

He felt her start, and then she looked up into his face, but was silent.

" I know it all," he continued ; " and it is not to hurt you, Martha, that I mention it, for I like you for your constancy to the poor lad."

" He deserves it, sir," at length replied Martha, in the

same low term which Mutford used; "there was not as good a boy in the village: and he deserves more from me, and will get it, if I live."

"I think I know what you mean, now, too," resumed Mutford; "a friend of yours has hinted it to me; and Martha, if indeed you do *that*, or even have a strong intention to do it, at present, I will call *you* the best *girl* in the village."

"What, sir?" asked Martha.

"Go to poor Fred."

"I say again, as sure as I live to do it, I will, then, and think it nothing uncommon to do either."

"Is he aware of your intention?"

"He be, sir, since the hour he left England."

"Have you heard from him since?"

"Often, sir; I have a letter of his in my pocket this moment, and it came to me yesterday."

"You have? Well, then, Martha, only that lovers' letters are to be peeped into by no one but lovers, I would make a little request of you."

"To let you see what kind of letters we write to one another, sir?"

"Yes; and what kind of a letter Fred can write to you, who so well deserve a good one every day in the week."

"You can read it, sir, as soon as we get to Mr. Linnock's: I bayn't ashamed to show it, either on Fred's account or my own, since you give yourself the trouble of thinking about us, Mr. Mutford."

"I am sorry he ever — " Mutford stopped short, for several reasons, —one of them personal: he felt he had no right to be sorry that Fred had done what he himself was going to do. But Martha took him up.

"Ever went a-smuggling, sir. So be I. And yet, that be one o' the very reasons why I think as I do about him. For I be sure, it was for my sake — to make himself rich enough for our coming together — that Fred took to t'other trade, when times grew bad with his own, sir."

"Martha, I am curious to learn one thing. Did Fred often visit Mr. Boakes's chapel?"

"Never, as I know of, Mr. Mutford, but always came

with mother and me, sometimes to church, sometimes to the Wesleyan chapel, the same as mother and me do, at present."

"And, either in one place or the other, have you never heard it said that Fred's new trade, and mine that is to be, was any harm?"

"Yes, sir, but never was brought to believe it. And I don't see why, if I believe other things I have heard at church or meeting, I be bound to believe that."

"Why, those that ask you to believe those other things ask you to believe that also."

"I know as they do, sir; but be they attorneys or parliament men, as well as good preachers? and though not as good a preacher as they be, bayn't I, may be, as good an attorney on this head? haven't I the right to be? haven't I a better right than they have? cause why, I be poorer than they be."

"But we all certainly break through a law that is in the statute-book, Martha, while going on with our t'other trade."

"I *, for one, never put it there, sir, nor never gave my good will to *have* it put there," answered Martha; "and I would say, up to their faces — and I said the same thing once, up to the faces of some o' them — there is no right on their side, by good law, or good Bible, to send a young man across the wide seas, from his family and his country, for doing only what Fred did; and that 's the foreright of all I know about it."

"Bad argument, Martha," said Mutford to himself, "though I am not sure I could give as good, in exculpation of my own present adhesion to your honourable trade, inasmuch as, I fear, my conscience and something else are not so easy on the question. But what 's in the wind now?" he asked aloud. They had just struck a little inland from the cliff, and gained the almost flattened summit of the point, more than once before described to the reader. Turning their backs to the three remarkable rocks called the Three Williams, they were about to descend into a spacious valley, the shortest way to Mr. Linnock's house.

* This conversation is fact, for which none but Martha, and those who agree with her, are accountable. It may do no harm to let others know it *is* fact.

In this situation, distant shouts, and bellowing voices, reached them from the cliff-path which they had quitted, and, as they turned to look behind them, the shrieks of a single person, kept up nearly without a pause, came on in the same direction, but much nearer to the listeners. Mutford looked keenly along the path, and saw the figure of a woman running, and sometimes dancing or jumping towards him and his companion. While he watched her, he felt the two girls at his either side press close to him, and draw back, while Jane responded the wild woman's shriek, and Martha, drawing in her breath, said — "Lucy Peat, as I be a born living girl! Turn, Mr. Mutford, and let us not wait for her — let us run from her! I be dead afeard to face her!"

"She has her hand fast shut on the knife ever since!" added Jane, beginning to run fast. Martha seconded her, and Mutford, perforce, ran too.

"Stop! stop!" cried the hoarse voice of Lucy, gaining upon them every instant, while the more distant shouts and clamour of her pursuers also grew more fiercely loud, "stop and save me! I know who ye be! I know you, Mr. Michael Mutford, and you, Martha Huggett! ye passed me, a minute ago, while I lay alone a-hiding! — stop, I say, and save me from them! they will hear you speak for me, Mr. Michael; and you, too, Martha, for you was always good, and they like you! Stop, or have my life to answer for! Stop, or I jump over the cliff! — Stop, stop!"

Mutford hesitated at this appeal. The girls, in terrified expostulation, strove to drag him on. Thus Lucy had time to gain on them; and, in fact, before they supposed her so near, she raced past them, confronted them, and, at the same instant, sprang upon Mutford and clasped him round the body. Jane Simmons ran to meet her pursuers, uttering loud cries; Martha Huggett, snatching at the wrist of Lucy's right hand, said, "Would you murder him, too?" — Mutford, by using all his strength, was just able to disengage her arm from his body and hold her off.

"Murder him? harm him? no, Martha Huggett — I have harmed him enough already, — him and his! I know it now; and I know, too, that if there be the God

above you say there be, I am punished for it this night!" As Lucy said these words, she was kneeling at Mutford's feet, wringing her hands (Jane had not spoken truth about the knife), and sometimes rolling and writhing on the grass. "But, Mr. Michael," she continued, "for all that, I cry out to you to save me! Hark! they be a-coming very near! Oh, do not let them take me, and tie me, and send me in the cart to gaol! tell them I be mad! and I do think I be! I do hope I be! Oh, speak to them, for I *see* them now! and catch me by the arm, and you, good Martha Huggett, catch me by the t'other arm! — save me, save me!"

"Hold her fast, there! hold her fast!" cried voices close behind.

"Will ye, will ye, will ye!" rejoined Lucy, again clinging to Mutford with one arm, and seizing Martha's hand with the other.

"Wretched creature!" cried Mutford, a second time putting her off, "I forgive you, I pity you; but how can *I*, — how can any one save you, if you have murdered the man!"

"Lay hands on her!" repeated the pursuers.

"Well then!" Lucy started up, and continued speaking while she ran, in an oblique direction, to where the cliff was highest, and a sheer precipice, "if ye will not, ye who are good people, ye who are good Christians, see what I can do, to save myself, I, Lucy Peat, who never believed in God or devil, see this!" She ran to the very verge of the cliff. Mutford now mingled with her hunters, and — all crying out in horror, and pursuing her fast, but yet not close to her — she ran to the very verge of the cliff, and prepared to jump. It seemed that fear checked her. She stopped a few seconds; then, turning her back to the sea, and her face to the yelling crowd, her heels still on the crumbling edge of the precipice, she bent backwards, waved her hands twice or thrice round her head, and as Mutford almost touched her skirts disappeared. He and all around him stood still, in sudden silence, as if listening; but no cry was heard, and no buffet; nothing — so great was the fall; nothing to overmaster the blustering

wind on that high point, where not even a dash of the sea ascended.

In the wild solitude, in the clear moonshine, all continued standing silent, even after the time had elapsed within which they ought to have counted upon hearing any thing. Then they looked into one another's eyes, and some, Mutford along with them, held hand by hand and peered over the cliff. But this was idle. In the shadow at the cliff's base, so far beneath, no object of any kind could be distinguished. Mutford had thought he might probably catch a stir upon the rocky shingles; but that was even a more erroneous calculation. The men, girls, and children, who had hunted the poor fugitive to the cliff's bourne, went home, in groups, talking among themselves in whispers. Mutford stood alone upon the very spot where Lucy's feet had last rested. For many minutes he stood there, bound to it in horror, terror, stupefaction. Pity softened and relieved him; and clasping his hands, and resting his head upon them, he said aloud, — "Poor, neglected, untaught one! child of a father and of a mother who disowned you! pupil of parish love and charity! I forgive you; and so will she whom you have also injured."

He then turned from the cliff. Martha Huggett and Jane Simmons were watching him from a distance. He joined them, and all pursued their way to Mr. Linnock's.

Approaching the old farm-house by a private path that led to its rear, our friends saw a man lounging against a stile over which they had to mount. They paused, at Martha's instance. The person also seemed to have observed them; for putting his large figure in motion, he came slowly towards them. Martha looked sharply forward, at the distance of about twenty yards, and gaining full confidence, said — "All be right, Mr. Mutford: 'tis the friend as you're come to see; belike," slightly pressing his arm, — "belike, sir, he expected to meet you on this path."

Greetings were, indeed, soon exchanged between Mr.

Linnock and his former acquaintance; and no sovereign ever gave to a newly-named premier, in a first audience, a more gracious one than the gentle smuggler vouchsafed to Michael Mutford.

"And you must be tired, sir, after your long walk," continued Mr. Linnock, "you and those little maidens as have come to show you the way, so — step you, Martha, into the house, with Jane Simmons, first of all, and see if you cannot come upon nothing nice, — no, Jane will go alone, while I say a word to you here, for a minute; — there, my pretty maid, that's the way. And now, Mr. Mutford, tired as you are, you'll excuse me telling Martha two words that she ought to hear. I may have no better opportunity, 't is such a busy night in doors, sir, and not expected so soon."

"A run-in, to-night, again, Mr. Linnock?" asked the attentive and business-like Martha.

"I be blessed, ay, old girl, and, as you know, we didn't reckon on it for a night or two."

"And all safe, sir?"

"All in the very house, Martha: and so, Mr. Mutford, we be as busy and as merry within as folk can well be — just what I told you; with other matters, too, to keep us alive; but we shall speak of them presently: and, Martha, 'tisn't that news, alone I have for you, old girl: but, harkee — and never mind Mr. Mutford; he and I have chatted about you afore now — harkee, Martha, there's news from *beyond there*, too."

"Another letter, Mr. Linnock?"

"No, Martha; guess again."

"I ha'ant got no other guess to make, sir," answered Martha, her voice faltering.

"Did nobody never write you word, Martha, when you wrote to him of going to see him, that, if he could, he would hinder you, and that in spite of all the great 'uns and all the sharp 'uns; where there's a will, there's a way, my maid!"

"Bless my heart, Mr. Linnock, what is it as you do mean?" questioned Martha, sitting unconsciously, sinking, indeed, upon a large stone which was behind her, and taking

off her little bonnet, and holding it on her knees, in the same absent manner, while her hands shook, and her lips trembled, and her eyes were fixed on her patron.

"Don't you go for to make any great things of a bit of a fuss, now, Martha, for your own sake, and for another body's sake, and you shall soon know what I mean," continued Mr. Linnock: "holloring out in this place, and this night, in particklar, or swounding, or such like, wouldn't be the way to keep him safe from the knowledge of one body I don't much like as should be able to tell any thing about him; and that one body I mean is Sam Geeson, who is not turning out a foreright good 'un, as you shall soon hear of, too; and so, my maiden——"

"Mr. Linnock," interrupted Martha, "holloring out or swounding be not my way, when to have one's mind about one would be a better way. But won't you tell me, sir, in one word, is it of——" She looked round her, stooped her head forward to Mr. Linnock, and ended in a whisper — "of Fred you be talking?"

"Of Fred and no other, my old girl: he was seen at t'other side of the briny, this morning."

"In France, sir?" continued Martha, clasping her hands.

"In France, at Boulogne; and master-mate had a word with him; and Fred only asks you, now, to cross a *short* sea to him, you and old mother together; and there you three can live as safe, and grow as rich as archbishops, every one doing a hand's turn, now and then, for an old friend, the Miss Molly. I shouldn't be downright glad to lose you for good, at both sides o' the water, Martha, my maiden." The sagacity and laudable attention to his own interests of Mr. Linnock were slightly discernible through the good feeling and philanthropy of this little speech.

"Poor Fred, poor lad!" said Martha, "and so you be in France, so near me; and what a many precious troubles you must have had the heart to face and overcome, to get there; in France to-night," she repeated, turning her head in the direction of the sea.

"I didn't say that," rejoined Mr. Linnock.

She turned her head round again quickly, and asking, in a long-drawn manner, "No?" her eyes, glittering in the moonlight, again were fixed on Linnock.

"No, Martha; not downright: he may have stolen over to-night, for what I know."

"But *don't* you know, sir?"

"Why, I be blessed, Martha, but if you do promise ——"

"Oh, nons'ns, now, sir, nons'ns," she stood up and leaned on him, for she trembled more than ever, "you know you've no call to be afeard of me, in regard of all that; and so do, Mr. Linnock, pray, pray do, sir."

"Stop a bit, then." Mr. Linnock whistled. Young Fred jumped over a fence near to them, and came on slowly enough to Martha, his head falling down, and his left hand in his trousers pocket. Martha, after a little start, parted from Mr. Linnock, and, in her turn, advanced in a regulated pace, though not quite so deliberately, to meet him half way. It did seem, indeed, that Mr. Linnock's fears and remonstrances were thrown away. Notwithstanding her evidently strong and sincere attachment, and the unexpected joy she must have experienced, Mutford only observed, that her eyes suddenly filled with tears, and that a spasmodic smile worked her features.

They came close to one another, each holding out the right hand, and Fred, looking ashamed of his, although his face denoted deepfelt pleasure. Their hands joined, and Martha said, "Be it you, Fred?"

And Fred answered, "Ay, old girl, it *be*."

And such was *the scene* of a re-meeting, under the known circumstances, between two real English lovers of humble degree. Martha, indeed, improved it a little, upon second thought. While they still held each other's right-hand, she put up her left to her eyes, and, with the knuckles of it, scooped out the tears that, to her great shame, *would* make way through her closed lids; and, in the midst of this occupation, she, all of a sudden, flung down her left hand, opened her eyes wide, stretched forward her neck to Fred, pouted out her lips, and kissed his lips so snatchingly and energetically, that he staggered back a pace, quite taken off his guard.

"There," said Mr. Linnock, "there, that will do; and now, my maiden."

"Mr. Linnock!" interrupted Martha, "his life be in danger in England to-night!"

"Not if you go by what I'll tell you," replied Mr. Linnock; "take him you know where, out of Sam Geeson's sight, for a few hours, and be you ready, then, to run across to France, old mother and you, as I said before, with him, and the thing is done, just as you heard me say it would be, Martha, my maid."

"Very well; let's see," said Martha.

"Good-by, then. Come, Mr. Mutford, we are bound for the house, now; and before speaking on your own little business, I will have to ask your advice in settling rather a disagreeable affair in doors."

The disagreeable affair Mr. Linnock stated on their way to the house. An industrious woman of the sea-side village was in the habit, he said, of getting a cheap passage in the Miss Molly, to buy French eggs for her shop, and perhaps, at the same time, turn an honest penny in any other way she could.

"I comprehend," observed Mutford, "and I believe I know the industrious woman's name too — 't is Fox?"

Mr. Linnock agreed, and went on to say that she had landed, with her little cargo, that very night, nigh at hand.

"Indeed?" queried Mutford, his mind glancing back to the state in which he had seen her house about two hours ago, "and proposes to sleep under her own roof to-night?"

"Yes," Mr. Linnock said, "directly a little accident could be arranged for her, she would put her eggs and herself upon a cart in waiting, and make all speed to surprise her little husband, who could not be supposed to expect her home for some nights to come."

Mutford's mind permitted the only relief it had experienced since he left the cliff, as he said to himself, "Mas'r Fox, Mas'r Fox, the sly; prepare thyself!"

"And now to the point," continued Mr. Linnock. "This poor woman, while the Miss Molly was working off to-night, had been robbed of her purse; had acquainted

the Miss Molly's proprietor with her loss, appealing to him to see justice done to her; and, Mr. Mutford would observe, here was a case of some difficulty and delicacy; the Miss Molly's character for honour and honesty at stake, as well as an industrious creature plundered of what she could ill afford to lose; and, in fact, it must be seen about."

"Had she named any person as the probable thief?" Mutford asked.

Yes; a person of whom Mr. Linnock had more than once spoken to-night, in no approving language: Sam Geeson, in fact. He had not been across with the Miss Molly this time, but had run down from the village to give a hand to work her. It was he who helped Mrs. Fox from the lugger into a boat; and it was in the boat she missed her purse, quite sure that she had had it safe in her pocket while aboard a moment before.

"What did Geeson say?" — "Nothing," Mr. Linnock replied; "for he had not yet been spoken with on the subject, and, to the present moment, suspected nothing." Now, however, Mr. Linnock proposed to wile him into the house, and quietly hear what he might have got to say; and he requested Mutford's presence during the investigation. Meantime the worthy parent of the Miss Molly and her little crew had his own misgivings of the 'prentice. It was not the first time he had been strongly suspected of an admiration of other people's accompaniments, nay — and Mr. Linnock shuddered while he said it of one in his employment — there was not positive proof that Sam was perfectly ignorant of all the circumstances of certain burglaries, which, to the disgrace as well as terror of the county, had lately been perpetrated in his neighbourhood.

Mutford and his patron gained the little low-arched door leading into the farm-house. There, sitting upon a large hamper, while another, as also some bundles and packages, stood piled behind her, sat a tall stout woman, well muffled in a cloak and shawls, and with a handkerchief tied over her bonnet till it met under her chin. It was the distressed Mrs. Fox. Linnock saluted her by name, and told her he was about to see justice done to her. He would send out for her in a minute.

They entered the house. Its master led the way into the same little parlour of business which was the first room Mutford had made acquaintance with in the mansion upon a remarkable night. Ere he had quite crossed its threshold, the door of a more hospitable apartment opened,—a well-known fair and freshly-red face, half hidden in luxuriant ringlets of fair hair, and two still fairer shoulders, as full dressed as ever, darted through it; and the next instant he was tripped up to, with a pretty little musical shriek of delight, and his hand and arm were thrice shaken—the operator rising on her toes at each shake—and welcomed again and again. This would have been extremely flattering, had not Mutford's self-depreciating evil genius remarked to him, that there was now no handsome and athletic Lieutenant Graves at his side. However, he allowed none of this want of spirit to appear, but responded, in act and word, to the distinguished greeting; like the way, he believed, in which Miss Eliza thought every gentleman of courage ought to do.

Warned, good-humouredly, by her sage father, that there was business to be attended to for a moment, Miss Eliza then tripped and fluttered back to the room of the piano, contented to live on the hopes of seeing her visiter soon again. Mr. Linnock left Mutford alone in the parlour, to seek Sam Geeson.

They came into Mutford's presence, conversing together on indifferent subjects. Evidently the cautious old smuggler had not yet whispered Mrs. Fox's name to the 'prentice; in fact, he feared to give Sam an opportunity of conjuring any thing off his person.

The door closed, and salutations having been exchanged between Sam and Mutford, business commenced in reality. Mr. Linnock repeated Mrs. Fox's charge, distinctly, and suddenly, and briefly. The accused, wincing very little, if at all, laughed sturdily at it. Mrs. Fox was then called in; she upheld Mr. Linnock's story. Sam still asserted his innocence, and began to bluster. The bland Mr. Linnock addressed to him a fatherly and touching speech. He pointed out how absolutely necessary it was to satisfy Mrs. Fox, in some way, before *she should make her com-*

plaint to another tribunal; in which view of the case the interests of a good many were concerned.

"I knows that, Mas'r Linnock," said Sam, expressively. Mr. Linnock went on. He reminded the accused that the fair character of the Miss Molly, and of all the persons, and the whole concern connected with her, were at stake; and he besought one of her youngest children to lay that to his heart, and act as it would suggest to him to do.

"And what 's axed of me, Mr. Linnock"— Sam grew a little respectful again—"more than I 've done? to tell you and she I knows nothing about it?"

Mr. Linnock, under all the circumstances, was sorry to say that he thought the 'prentice ought to submit to be searched on the spot.

"He be jiggered if he would, then."

That did not look well, Mr. Linnock observed; and it might make Mrs. Fox more than ever inclined to go before a magistrate.

"Let her; and let *her*, and all who advise her to go, get all the good they can by it."

"I do not care for your threats to myself, Sam, where honour and honesty are concerned;" Sam laughed his unlovely laugh; "and so I tell you, that if you do not submit to be searched here, quietly, you shall not stir out of this room till you are searched in spite of you."

Mr. Linnock's tone and manner became suddenly firm and commanding. Sam looked at him puzzled, and frowning badly; then he said, "Very well, Mr. Linnock; now we be a-going to understand one another. I tried this here little lark of a trick just to find out your mind towards me; nothing else, Miss's, or I be blowed; so, there be your purse,"—he flung it on the ground,—"and good night; and good night to *you*, too, Mr. Linnock; not forgetting good Mr. Michael Mutford, in the corner, who advised all this nons'ns, along with you, and sits there to see me blown, as he be a thinking of; good night, gentlemen."

Linnock strode hastily after Sam, and detained him inside the door, whispering him anxiously. Mrs. Fox had picked up her purse the moment she heard it jingle

on the floor; and now, saying that she did believe Sam meant no harm, and that she forgot and forgave, professed her intention to load her cart with eggs, sundries, and self, and ride off as fast as she could to her poor dear Mas'r Fox.

"Do, then," laughed the 'prentice, as she passed him; and Mutford thought he laughed as if he knew something.

"That 's the very case, Sam," said Mr. Linnock, after she had withdrawn, continuing aloud the conversation he had begun in whispers; "to take you out of her power; nothing more; to let her see we are honest folk, and to keep us all as clear as possible of what none of us love or like — law, Sam, law; and if I *did* speak big to you, why, it was put on, just to make a show to her face: I feared you might go on with the joke too long; perhaps a day or so, merely to frighten her; and then, the Foxes are so poor, and such skin-flints, who could say what might happen? and they knowing a little too much — that is, in case we vexed them; and so, Sam, see what is inside o' this other purse," handing him one, "to ——"

"To make up for the one I stole but warn't let keep?" interrupted Sam, grinning, as he put the gift in his pocket.

"No, no; to pay you for your half night's work, and some arrears; have I not told you I was as sure as yourself you only meant a lark, like?"

"Well, Mr. Linnock, thankee; and I be sure you did" — and Samuel left the room.

"Upon my veracity, Mr. Mutford, I was sure of no such thing," resumed Mr. Linnock, turning to his new friend; "contrary-wise, I believe, in my conscience, the 'prentice stole the purse, as sure as he ever swallowed a go of *eaudivvy:* but, you see, sir, one is now and then obliged to be peaceable, for peace-sake, and to keep one's crust whole; so that, for the same reason that I made him give back the little prize to Mrs. Fox, that is, to keep *her* on our hands, I am forced not to aggravate Sam; he could injure us, sir, all of us; you and me, and the whole concern; and there 's a heavy lump of reddish flesh between his eyes that I don't half admire; I wish we never had nothing to do with Sam;

but that 's useless, now ; the only thing to be done is to watch him and humour him ; and I think, for the present, he is quiet."

Mutford was not without observing the ready tacking of his name to "the whole of the concern," in the first part of this speech ; and with the latter part of it he did not agree.

"Well, sir," Mr. Linnock continued, drawing a chair close to Mutford's, and resting his hands on his knees, soberly and demurely, "and 't is time we finished our own little business, now, I think."

"I think so, too, Mr. Linnock," answered the candidate for promotion, quite as demurely.

"We have heard it said that you have sailed before this time of day, Mr. Mutford ?"

"You have been rightly instructed, Mr. Linnock ; before the death of my elder brother, I was a midshipman for two years."

"Very good, sir, very good." Mr. Linnock bowed respectfully, yet in a way that suggested he was thinking of the honour and character of the Miss Molly as much as of Mutford's youthful achievements ; "and you are also master of the French tongue, I believe ?"

"I have spoken it among the French people, so as always to make myself understood, sir," Mutford continued, smiling to himself, contemptuously ; and yet he was amused, too.

"The honour of your hand, then, Captain — Captain Mutford of the Miss Molly ;" and still most gravely the arch smuggler extended his ; "and 't is the first time since I sailed myself, that any one bore that title ; my fair-haired brother Bob is mate — no more ; and even the Don was but — *but* the Don : in fact, the only name we gave him ; to be sure, he had little to do with working the vessel, though you will have a good deal, and only filled *one* of your appointments — that of interpreter among the knowing ones, at t' other side, who, I protest to you, sir, often plundered us upon the wilful mistake of a few words of broken lingo ; and so — you accept your commission, Captain ?"

"On conditions, master and owner."

"That of course. Captain's pay of the Miss Molly always a sixth of the *bonâ fide* turn up of each of her runs-in."

"A little indefinite, master mine. What can you value each trip at, one with another?" Mutford looked at certain notes he had made upon a card. Mr. Linnock eyed him keenly, without his knowledge.

"Well, sir, well; suppose we say," and he mentioned a specific sum for each trip.

"And how many trips a month, owner?"

"As many as *you* can make, sir; I bless Providence, the demand on the concern is able to bear your best in the way of supply."

"So far so good, sir. Condition second: an advance, forthwith, to the amount of the pay of two trips."

"Done, Captain." Mr. Linnock walked to a desk, deliberately unlocked it, and told down on Mutford's knee a respectable little heap of Bank of England notes.

"A bargain, then, Mr. Linnock — I am thy captain:" — he rolled up the notes, and Linnock did not notice the expression of his face, as Mutford crushed them hard in his hand, and setting his teeth, at the same time, indulged in this short reverie — "'Tis won — 'tis *had!* — I am bought and sold — ay, and by and to the man before me — but, no matter. Bessy, you shall not starve — and you, Brother-lieutenant Graves, you shall not call me a swindler, though you may yet be the very man to run me down for a smuggler: — my other creditors must wait."

When Mr. Linnock glanced at his newly-made officer, Mutford was smiling and tapping the floor with his foot. — "Recollecting something I heard you say to Martha Huggett, owner, I presume I soon step aboard?"

"The Miss Molly ought to stand off for 'tother coast before day-break, Captain."

"I am ready, then, and glad of getting to work so soon. Shall we have need to dodge about, at the other side, for any length of time?"

"I should think not, sir; enough cargo for two trips is ready at hand, mas'r mate says."

"Good. Tell me one other thing, worshipful. Suppose a chase by one of those holiday cutters — what then?"

"First of all, I should say ——"

"Oh, I know that; get off from the gauger, if possible; but if he won't let us? and, suppose, says something to bring us to?"

"The Miss Molly has a few teeth in her jaw, Captain."

"And, with a good chance, if snarled at, ought to snarl again, you think?"

"With a real good chance, perhaps, she ought, sir. Her cargo is always worth keeping."

"And has she ever tried to keep it in the way we were speaking of?"

Mr. Linnock let his colossal head fall towards his breast, laughed, and spoke of supper, and a tune on the piano, before going down to look after the boats. Mutford could understand a hint, and so he changed the topic.

"The Don, owner — the Don; you once told me I should know more about him, if you and I stood as we do stand to-night."

"I remember," assented Mr. Linnock, "and you'll find me a man of my word, Captain Mutford, in that as well as other things. The Don was a relation of your own,"— Mutford started, — "your half-brother, Lord Allen."

"The madman? — and you chose him to do business for you, Mr. Linnock?"

"Madman they call him now, I admit; madman he was not then, however, Captain; and I know a thing or two about him, and perhaps about yourself into the bargain ——"

"D—n him, sir!" said Mutford, suddenly and fiercely; — Mr. Linnock, good man, stared: — "yes, owner, under your favour, let him be very particularly confounded — he and his — that is, sir, so far as any thing can concern him and me in common. And now, as you said yourself, a while ago, supper, a tune on the piano, and Miss Eliza, (whom you, sir, did *not* add,) with all my heart and stomach; for, indeed, proprietor, I am hungry; but first — I had forgotten" (Mutford had *not*) — "oblige me with a sheet or two of paper, — here are pens and ink — and the

privilege of being alone a moment,—I mean while I can write a letter."

Mr. Linnock complied with his officer's demands, and quitted the little parlour, requesting Mutford to repair to the supper-room as soon as he could find time to do so, while he, Mr. Linnock, would just step out of the house to hasten the preparations for getting the Miss Molly under weigh, and return when it should be the hour for summoning her captain on board.

Mutford sat down, took a pen in his hand, and was about to write. Before he did so, however, a leer stole over his face, his eyes fixed on nothing straight before him, and he ended in giving way to a disagreeable, low laugh. Something like the following were the rational notions that produced these rational effects:—"Ay, indeed: bought and sold; Doctor-Faustus-like; and, in the name of the fiend! who knows what this black-muzzled old smuggler — or the semblance of him — may be? I wish I had looked close at his nether extremities;"— and, not quite discontinuing his laugh, Mutford counted out the sum of money he had borrowed of Lieutenant Graves, and enclosed it to him in a sheet of paper, merely writing the words— "Thanks, and good-by."

But when he took up another sheet of paper, which was to cover another enclosure, he grew serious, saddened, tamed. His head rested on his hand, he sighed and groaned. He wrote the following:—

"My dearest, dearest sister,

"In a much shorter time than I had expected, after parting from you, I have been fortunate enough to succeed in providing the enclosed,—honestly and independently. I send it immediately to you, to guard against the probability, or even possibility, of the sum I left for you in the hands of your landlady not proving ample for your wants and comforts. Use it freely, for I am rich, and, with attention (strict attention) to my present and future duties, shall be. Those duties do and will prevent me, however, from seeing you very soon. But I *must* elude them, in a month or two, to make you a visit. Till then, think of me, as of a brother

that loves you truly and dearly, and that to the day of his death will cherish and protect you, as well as he can.

"Provide yourself, dear Bessy, with every comfort and assistance demanded by your situation. This I request, beseech, and, if I may or ought, command. And tell me how you are, by a letter addressed to me "Poste restante, Boulogne-sur-Mer," and I will answer you speedily. Farewell, dearest Bessy.

"Your most affectionate brother,
"MICHAEL MUTFORD."

Poor Bessy never received this letter.

When he had written and sealed it, he examined the amount of the bank notes now remaining at his disposal, on his own account, and smiled grimly as he ascertained that it was still enough for a cherished purpose. He then arose, spiritedly, stamped his foot on the floor, as if re-assuring himself of the return and sufficiency of his bodily strength, for any good enterprise, and, the next moment, entered the supper-room, humming the words of the popular song which Miss Eliza just then happened to be playing on—*her* piano.

He supped with the two charming sisters, delighting both, but to Miss Eliza was downright gallant. He laughed—but, now, merrily, or seemingly so—he was witty, smart, assailing, and captivating. She sang all her nicest new London songs for him; he had none of the kind to respond to her with, at her request, but he gave her scraps of some she had never before heard—though she avowed her admiration of them—rhyming quips, and cranks, and oddities, in fact, of his own brain, never gone on with, and for the most part never even noted down. For example, first—and Miss Eliza smiled and dimpled under this specimen of his original composition (he had drunk enough wine to make him own his poetical genius)—though, indeed, they had once been inspired by a very different person—

"Young thing, I thought my day was o'er,
For loving as I loved before;
Young thing, I thought my heart was old,
And all its pulses dead or cold—
But I had never seen thee, then—
Oh, ask me not to love again!"

The next scrap nearly did away with the effect of this one. Mutford had written a song when he was a gay and discerning midshipman of fifteen, but could now recollect only a very untrimmed bit of it: he knew, he said, that one verse began with a line which ended with — no — he could not tell what; but certainly, the next line ended with — either bowers, or hours, and then it went on —

* * * * *

"And why *should* not the garden of women
Be like to the garden of flowers?
Oh, if one be my rose, daffodilly,
Sweet-Willy,
Or lily,
Another I call;
Nay ——"

And here Mutford's memory again failed him, and he could only aver that the last line of *that* verse ran thus — to rhyme with "I call —"

"Why *not* snatch a leaf from them all?"

The third specimen, in answer to a fashionable boat-song from Miss Eliza, was, most probably, an extempore —

"Right jolly smugglers we!
Of all melancholy
And folly,
From morning to night ever free —
Oh, right jolly smugglers we!

"In the old night's noon,
In the glimpse of the moon,
O'er waters that creep,
Glassy and deep,
Or when they run dashing,
Foaming and flashing,
Our sure way we know,
As we go, as we go; —
The happiest fellows,
The honestest fellows,
The jolliest fellows that sail here below!
Oh, right jolly smugglers we!"

It was rather difficult to sing some of these lines to any known airs; but Mutford insisted he had adapted them all to airs very well known indeed, though they were old

English ones, sterling old English ones, and therefore not much in the mouths of singers of the present day. It is believed, however, in the face of his assertion, that he invented the airs out of his own musical imagination, (in downright truth, he had neither an ear for music, nor the slightest knowledge of it as a science,) and performed them, for the first time, *ad libitum*, on the spot.

Miss Eliza sang something touching, about home, and he recollected eight lines that might serve as an answer, —

"It is not home, it is not home,
When from the old familiar places
All, all are gone, changed or gone,
The old familiar faces!

"Their gentle light alone made bright
Each trait the sun here vainly plays on—
And since to me dimm'd they be,
'T is *not* old home I gaze on!"

And these were followed without any provocation, except the flow of his own associations, by other lines that he had almost unconsciously put together in the comparatively sunny days of his first youth, when, after many changes of place and of climate with his father and his sister, he wanted to prove to himself, in verse, how independent of the clouds or the latitude, or the time of the year, human beings are, —

"We brought the summer with us,
We brought the summer with us!
Flowers might blow or fade,
Skies make sun or shade,
'T was all the same,
Where'er *we* came,
We brought the summer with us!

"The summer was within us!
The summer was within us!
Minds, *our* skies, so bright
In the heart's sun-light—
And fancy's bowers
To give us flowers —
Oh, we brought the summer with us!"

Lines like the last he had indulged in must needs have called up recollections; and recollections were not exactly calculated to enable Mutford to keep up his sparkling

powers on the present occasion. So he sank, and grew dismal-faced, and stupid, and, Miss Eliza thought, tipsyish and ugly. By the aid of another of her merriest songs, however, another glass of champagne, and a resolute rally, Mutford came round again, in sufficient force to give Mr. Linnock — when he appeared to summon his captain on board the Miss Molly — the opportunity of detecting him on his knees to Miss Eliza, and doing not unbidden homage to her fair hand, perhaps.

And — "Well, as I live," said Miss Eliza to her sister, after he had taken leave, to walk down to the beach with her father, "Mr. Mutford is wonderfully improved, and may turn out to be a pleasing as well as a prosperous man, in a little time;" and she went on, making certain calculations and fancying certain contingencies suggested by almost every man she had seen since she was — what age? Ten.

"May I never see *her* face again," was Mutford's ungrateful reciprocation of these generous thoughts in his regard, as the sound of the sea came on his ears, and in the shadow of a tall rock, Mr. Linnock, affectionately and like a father, taking his hand, and bidding "God bless him!" pointed out the boat which was to bear Mutford to the Miss Molly.

We are in France — though not far advanced into "the bowels of the land;" in Boulogne, in fact. Boulogne, the most cheery-looking, if not the gayest town — of its size (nay, make no exception) — from itself to Paris: the most cheery-looking, at least of a market day, and in the main street of the *basse-ville;* (though here come in exceptions which gradually detract from our puff, after all;) — say as little as possible of the *haut-ville,* for there is the debtor's prison, playfully called by the French inhabitants of the town, *l'Hôtel d'Angleterre.*

We are in Boulogne. Boulogne — the sanctuary (what the Isle of Man used to be) of the persecuted of White Albion and her green "sister-isle" (as to Caledonia, "meet name for a poetic child," the only *residents*

she has contributed to it are making money in it,) — of the persecuted of White Albion, and her green "sister-isle;" the expatriated of credulous tradespeople and, haply, of credulous husbands; or the sanctuary of many other born Britons or Hibernians, to whom ere their willing abandonment of country, it was like unto a land of promise — of milk and honey, and fat — of claret, champagne, and cognac — of mansion-like chateaux, with court-yards, and aristocratic-looking gates — and to whom it was all this, if not more, at a third of "the prices" of the English or Dublin butcher, dairy-man, grocer, wine-dealer, landlord, and collector of taxes. Make liberal exceptions, among the five or six thousand "Anglais" of its motley population, on the score of good and amiable human beings who are in Boulogne either to educate their children, or simply because they like it — and put out of view, altogether, holiday visiters or bathers, or birds of passage — do this, and behold the two great classes of strangers which Boulogne numbers among her residents: first class, (so called, or as it calls itself,) men and women who, for many reasons, could not well stay at home, and who supply the far greater number (women as well as men — read it, and ponder over it, oh ye dames of England!) of lodgers to the *Hôtel d'Angleterre* — gloomy and ruthless abode, out of which, without paying the last farthing, there is no redemption! second class, only men and women who could have stayed at home, without fear of a sheriff's officer, a crim-con, or a duel, but who, purely and laudably, out of an affection for good things, have come hither to "live better," and seem of more consideration, upon a given sum, than they could do upon double its amount in brick-covered, high-taxed, wealth-wallowing, and yet — with a few unnameable exceptions — pinched and meagre England. Second class, we say, because, as has before been intimated, others will have it so; ay, and make it be felt so, too, by a very perfect system of colonial exclusiveness, imitated from the great mother-country — to the upholding of which, at the fiat — nay, the fiat of titles, sir, male and female (a little worse for the wear, perhaps — "but

what of that?") clubs, and subscription lists for "the establishment," (or, partially, little Willis's, as it tacitly aspires to be,) mainly tend; and, indeed, it is quite edifying, in the not unwatchful eyes of the French Boulonnais, to mark the squabbles thereby created between the two classes; the purchasing of whips and cudgels, for the personal improvement of one another — whips and cudgels seldom used, however; the placardings; the paper-wars; the self-sufficient hubbub — just as if they were all in a little town, at home, comfortable by themselves, and had not twelve or fourteen thousand people, besides, to bother, or put out of their way, or make laugh.

But do our dear countrymen and countrywomen of Boulogne — and perhaps of other places in France — never think of comforming themselves to the *genius* of the people among whom they have fixed their residence? Indeed they do; that is, according to their own notions. For instance. As manners and morals are said to be not so prim in France as in England or Ireland, young men of "the first class" will curse, and swear, now and then, and blaspheme, and drink hard; young women of the same class will sit down in the corner of a public ball-room, silent, fretty, and sulky, if the wife of some husband on whose arm they *have* been hanging the whole evening before (the whole week before) come in, and is guilty of the bad taste of taking his other arm. Old women of the same class will see their daughters do this, and perhaps something else, and think well of it. Middle-aged men of the same class will exchange wives,— and the wives will assent to the little arrangement, and every thing go on well. And these things happen with a *nonchalante*, at-home, matter-of-course air, to which we are only approaching pretty closely in England; it is the result of a feeling of being in France. "The French do not mind." Perhaps not. It may be added, however, that the cant of French carelessness in morals, once so pat in England, and taken up by silly and inexperienced, as well as innately vicious English people, (few, we know, they are — fewer may they be!) — taken up, conveniently, on trust, has greatly helped to sink — even below the level of a just

estimation of facts — our own character for behaving ourselves, in the eyes of our neighbours.

End the sermon, for it grows like one. We are in Boulogne : or rather outside Boulogne ; by the sea ; on the sands. It has been a clear, sunny winter's day ; the first shades of the premature evening just begin to steal on. Shots resound in our ears. We look about us, and discover a party of pigeon-shooters, just as regularly equipped as if you had met them on Primrose Hill, or on the east cliff at Hastings. Approach them.

The chief of the group is a man of forty, or thereabout. He is habited as a sportsman, and nothing in his face or air would make you give the odds that he may not be a groom. At his left-hand is a youth of twenty, looking more somebody, and of a slow, dry, superciliously-stupid *tournure*, incorrigibly, though only recently English. At his right-hand stands another individual — perhaps still younger — about eighteen — of moderate stature, taking sex into consideration, and wearing a game-bag and a powder-flask over her smartly expressed bust and short petticoats. She carries a light fowling-piece, ordered expressly for her, by the gentleman of forty ; it is raised to her hip ; is cocked ; her finger is on its trigger, ready to let it off ; and with one foot advanced before the other, in the vigorous attitude of a keen sportsman, she is intently watching the renewed attempt to fly upward, of a pigeon secured by a string to a stake. Her male supporters also carry fowling-pieces, of the usual size, — other unarmed friends are behind.

" Hang him — how tiresome ! he will *not* try it again, I believe," said the young lady.

" And yet I 'm sure you didn't wing him a grain more than we said you would, Fan," observed her friend to the right.

" I don't know that," she answered pettishly ; " I by no means shoot well to-day — not at all nicely — delicately ; but two out of three, for dead shots, and killed my bird, instead of only winging, or laming him, twice."

" Oh, come, Fan ; 't was very well : no human being is equally fortunate or skilful every day."

"You don't do yourself justice, indeed you don't," lisped the youth at her other side; "you have shot amazingly well."

"And ever does," added a gentleman behind.

"And is an honour to her master," said another.

"Yes, yes, I'm not ashamed of my little pupil," rejoined the white-hatted chief of the sport, patting her shoulder playfully.

"Are you not?" she asked, in a soft under-tone, and contriving to repay him with as grateful a glance as could be sent forth, sideways, from beneath the scanty protection of the peak of her male *casque*:— "then, in that case, do rout up that lazy pigeon for me — do throw one little stone at him."

"Here, then — ready!" — He stooped for the stone.

"Here, here — I *am* ready, deuce knows ——" and the stone was flung, and the broken-winged pigeon fluttered a few feet from the ground, and the gentle maiden fired — and great was the applause to see him come to the ground again, evidently not killed, but only lamed in the other wing, as it had been wagered would be the case.

"Lord Acorn," said one of the spectators, "here comes your wife." The fair amazon's tutor turned round, ejaculating pure English, indeed, but English sometimes interdicted — "Ay, Fan," he continued, "and your mamma with her."

"Indeed?" drawled forth Fan; "but I wonder her Ladyship ventures out, towards evening, with *her symptoms*."

"And so will the many in Boulogne, whom she has entertained with them," assented Lord Acorn.

"My wife heard them, at length, no later than this morning, a full hour, at Scamp's corner," observed a rubicund-faced person of the party.

"Oh, doubtless," resumed Lord Acorn; "but I grieve to inform all whom it may concern, that, before *I* left home to-day, the doctor decided that Lady Acorn and himself had all along been mistaken."

"What! nothing, after all, in 'Lady Acorn's symp-

toms?'" sneered the pretty amazon; and she was echoed, in great good-humour, by others of the group.

The subject of these remarks was yet at a distance. Now she drew near enough, with the mamma of Lord Acorn's pupil, to become exposed to personal criticism; and presently words of admiration escaped all; while Lord Acorn whispered to the young lady,—"She keeps her word, as I am a Christian man!—Relieved of 'her symptoms' this morning, and no longer in danger of injuring, by over-exertion, the long-promised heir of the house of Acorn, her Ladyship *has* mounted flask, bag, and piece, and issues forth to rival you in good earnest, Fan!"

Lady Acorn's low, round little figure certainly appeared caparisoned, as his Lordship intimated. Servants followed her and her friend.

"Lady Acorn, Lady Acorn, my love, *do* you mean to destroy yourself?" asked her husband, when she was within hearing:—"put by the piece, for heaven's sake, if 't is loaded!"

"I have been saying much the same thing to her Ladyship," observed the mother of the more experienced amazon —"and that it requires constant practice, and great caution, under such an instructor as your Lordship, before a lady can be safely trusted with a fowling-piece, at her own discretion."

"I am much obliged to you, dear Mrs. Howit," said Lady Acorn—and she continued with an expression of something like silliness—"but I am positively determined to shoot as well as Miss Howit, whether my dear Acorn will take me in hand or not;—and I will go on cautiously, you may be sure; beginning with a flash in the pan, and then adding a little powder, only, in the barrel, and then a little more, with a little paper, and no shot yet:—just as far as I have got to-day—and see!"—she presented her piece awkwardly, discharged it, wheeling round with a nervousness not yet broke in, and the flash of the powder almost singed her husband's whisker, and the paper wadding struck Mrs. Howit in the forehead, who, forgetting Lady Acorn's declaration, of paper, and paper only, shrieked, and said she was shot.

This little accident explained away, and soothed over, Lady Acorn asked her lord to accompany her home, with a view to prepare for dinner. He and Mrs. Howit, and Miss Fanny Howit, said, in a breath, that he was otherwise engaged.

"Oh, very well," assented her Ladyship—"I only hoped you might spare him for *one evening*, dear Mrs. Howit; and, indeed," continuing in a low, confidential tone of voice, to her friend, "I do think, for your own and dear Fanny's sake—at least on account of what people are saying—though I am sure they only take liberties with us all—but I do think you ought not to encourage Acorn every evening; besides, I think you allow him a little too much champagne, and that, and falling asleep on the sofa, may injure his health, you know."

"My dear Lady Acorn," answered Mrs. Howit, solemnly, "can you or any one expect me to seem ungrateful for the attentions paid to my family by a British nobleman?"

"Certainly not; come; let's go home." She withdrew, with her servant.

"Come, pupil," said Lord Acorn, giving his arm to Miss Fanny Howit;—"and you know I am to bring with us our young arrival from Paris;—but where is he?" His Lordship alluded to the youth we have mentioned as holding place at Miss Fanny's left hand, and who now was not to be seen.

"He parted from us, just as Lady Acorn came up," said the young lady, "and I watched why. A man in a cloak and hairy cap had come near us, and eyed him, once or twice, in a remarkable manner; and he did not seem to like that, and when the man walked a little farther off, he hurried towards the town, in another direction."

"Ay, I hope he is not to be provided, for the night, with a bed in the hotel in the high town; I suspect he has left Paris in some trouble, poor fellow; if he does not join us at dinner, or this evening, we must see and make him out, one of the first things, after breakfast, to-morrow; but home now, Fan, it gets chilly."

"Chilly as whose heart?" coquetted the pigeon-winger, in a tone as soft as an infant's lispings, while the whole sporting-party left the scene of their day's exploits.

Lieutenant Graves received Mutford's enclosure, by an unknown hand, very early on the morning after it was written. By a friend, just starting from the village, he despatched to his brother Richard, in London, an account of the circumstance. To this account allusion has already been made. Richard Graves received it on the evening of the same day. It distressed him anew, almost as much as he had before been distressed on Mutford's account. From it there arose the strong presumption, if not the certainty, that Mutford continued a system of gross deception towards his friend. He could not, as he had promised he would do, have returned to the sea-side village, and re-appeared in it, without having been recognised, and without the fact having come to the knowledge of Alexander Graves, whose anxiety would prompt him to make continued and minute enquiries on the subject. Mutford had, then, once more broken faith, delivering himself up to some desperate career — at least to some vain and wild one. Neither was his unfortunate sister Bessy in the village — and here appeared additional equivocation. And her lot — hers as well as his — what was it? — was he with her? — if not, whither had he sent her? — with whom? under what protection? — Graves shuddered at a new — a terrible fear. "The wild beast is up in his heart — and God only knows what he may be capable of doing! — doing — towards her! — and this money, too, which he has sent to Alexander — how can he have procured *that?* — Infatuated — possessed — wayward, as well as most unfortunate Mutford! — why has he not placed some reliance on my parting words? — Perhaps I did not impress them with sufficient force. I will go down to the village, this very night. Other business, though still connected with him, must have sent me thither to-morrow morning. Now, not an hour must be lost. If he be not there, perhaps some of the persons whose names

he has mentioned to me in his letters, or his journal — perhaps Lord Lintern himself, may give me a clue after him."

Graves was about to hasten himself to leave town in two hours, by the night-coach. A knock sounded at his outside door. He passed into an inner room to tell little Joey not to admit any person. Little Joey had already answered the knock, and Graves heard a gentleman say, — "The Reverend Mr. Snow to wait on Mr. Graves."

Associating the names, and, in some degree, the concerns of Mutford and Mr. Snow together, Graves changed his intention of denying himself, and went out to receive his visiter. — "Your pen is not quite as bad a portrait-painter as you said it was, Mutford," thought Graves, as he seated Mr. Snow in his audience-chamber: "I believe I could have guessed at its original without having him named to me."

"I wait on you, Mr. Graves, as the friend of Lady Ellen and Lord Allen," Mr. Snow began.

"I could have supposed so, sir," answered Graves.

"Indeed! and have either of my young friends forewarned you of my call, by letter?"

"No, Mr. Snow."

"One of them, then, who has consulted you some months ago, may have mentioned my name to you, at that time?"

"Not that I recollect, Mr. Snow; but a friend of mine did so, before that time; and an admiring friend of yours, also, sir — Mr. Michael Mutford."

"Mr. Michael Mutford! you know him, then, and intimately, Mr. Graves?"

"I knew him since he was about sixteen and I two-and-twenty, and as intimately as one bosom friend can know another."

"Well, this *is* fortunate; we shall do our business zealously, together, on account of it, Mr. Graves."

"I warrant you, Mr. Snow."

"To begin, then. Between four and five months since, Lord Allen consulted you, I believe?"

"He did, sir. He came to me and informed me that

a witness upon the last trial — the trial at bar, between his father, Lord Lintern, and the Mutfords — had made to him certain dying declarations."

"Of which I am aware," said Mr. Snow.

"And which, if legally established, would much tend to the happiness of the very Michael Mutford of whom we have spoken, Mr. Snow."

"And that I know, too, sir. Pray, before we go a step farther, let me ask if you ever acquainted your friend with the visit of his half-cousin to you, and of its nature?"

"Never, sir — for two reasons. First, his half-cousin pledged me to profound professional secrecy, until such time as he could receive advices from his sister, Lady Ellen, then living with her father, of the result of an attempt to induce Lord Lintern — and with your aid, I believe, sir" (Mr. Snow smiled and nodded), — "to admit and act upon the declaration of the dying witness, without the law's interference. That reason, sir, kept me silent, for the moment. My lips have since been sealed — at least since my last parting from Mutford — by other facts. Lord Allen led me to expect, day after day, for many days, that he should have a letter from his sister. None arrived — or, at least, he told me so. Suddenly he disappeared from town. He had promised to visit me anew, on a certain day. Weeks after that day passed, and I did not see him. I called at the address which he had given me, in strict confidence. The people of the house informed me he had been seized, under the certificate of a lunatic doctor, and conveyed to the country, having escaped thence, from confinement, as a lunatic. My credit in his story of the declaration entirely gave way. A short time after, Mutford himself wrote me word that Lord Lintern's elder son was a madman, and had arrived at his father's house, and been re-committed to close restraint. I gave up the case on which he had consulted me, altogether. It was but natural and reasonable I should do so. And now, I would not mention it to my poor friend, Mutford, because, without doing him the least good, it must only have added to his already excessive irritation upon the subject with which it was so closely connected."

"You acted wisely, Mr. Graves, under the circumstances. But I owe you a little explanation, on this part of our case. Your young client had good reason to expect a letter from his sister, Lady Ellen. She had promised to write to him, and would, if she could, have done so. But, immediately after the failure of our attempt to conciliate Lord Lintern, her father put it out of her power to keep her engagement. I had scarce left the house when he took away her writing materials, and dismissed her confidential companion; then he watched her closely, till the next morning; and then he conveyed her, himself, to Wales, where, till a few days ago, she has lived in the closest restraint, under the roof of his sister. I hold in my hand her letter, enabling me to give you this explanation, which I received only the morning before the last, after she had at length escaped, under fit and competent protection, from her aunt's house. And it is the same letter, Mr. Graves, which occasions my visit to you.

"In great anxiety about her poor brother, Lord Allen, and fearful, on account of her not having written to him before her journey into Wales, that the misfortune which *has*, must *have* befallen him, — my good young friend takes the earliest opportunity of giving me your name and address, — communicated to her by your client, after his first consulting you, — in order to enable us both, — you and me, Mr. Graves, — to see what can be done, with right, truth, and mercy on our side, to make his lot happier, and, at the same time, amend the fortunes of your own suffering friend, Mr. Michael Mutford."

"Well, Mr. Snow, we shall see. Is it true that my former client has been confined under the certificate of a lunatic doctor?"

Mr. Snow assented.

"Before he applied to me?"

"Months before, Mr. Graves."

"And ever since?"

Mr. Snow sighed deeply as he repeated—"Ever since."

"And is fairly the object of such wretched treatment at present?"

"Mr. Graves, we believe he has never been fairly its object."

"Indeed, sir! — But the certificate?"

"And have not you, in your hands, sir, the certificates of three other practitioners, of much greater celebrity than the gentleman who signed his sad sentence, asserting its fallacy?"

"No, Mr. Snow — nor have I heard of such documents."

"Indeed! he wrote word to his sister, after, I believe, his last interview with you, that he had procured them, and forwarded them to you by a messenger on whom he could rely — (he wished to avoid the humiliation of a first avowal to you of the miserable charge brought against him)."

"Then, Mr. Snow, let us have, without delay, the name and address of that trusty messenger."

"The Honourable George Allen, sir, his brother."

"Ay, indeed?"— Graves looked struck and thoughtful. "Mr. Snow, our experience of the details which now and then come out in the practice of our profession does not fully warrant us in believing that, for the bearer of such documents, under such circumstances, a brother is always to be chosen."

"Your meaning shocks me, Mr. Graves — and yet, the events seem to justify your suspicions. We have then to go to work anew. He must again be seen by men of professional rank and high moral character. It is indispensable. Indispensable, for his own sake, and for young Mutford's, and for his poor sister's sake — all are bound up in the same case. If the witness made the declaration attributed to him by Lord Allen, the Mutfords are righted. If Lord Allen be not proved sane, we cannot admit his testimony of that declaration."

"True, Mr. Snow. But, for our purposes of seeing the Mutfords righted, I am happy to inform you we do not now want to establish whether or not that declaration has ever been made."

"Indeed, Mr. Graves?"

"We cannot fail, indeed, to show the strong probability of its having been made, while we set up the case it would have gone to supply with evidence of a much stronger nature."

"Explain, Mr. Graves, pray explain; — and, showing the strong probability that it *has* been made, we show, at the same time, that — at least by his assertion of having heard it — Lord Allen is no lunatic?"

"Even so, Mr. Snow. Still the two cases go on, hand and hand. And now, sir, I explain. A few days ago, a lawyer, who — since the trial at bar between the Mutfords and Lord Lintern, mark you — has found me out, and given me briefs, called upon me, for the purpose of considering a letter he had just received. He was Lord Lintern's solicitor, and the letter was from his Lordship. I have a copy of it; and you had best read it."

Graves handed it to his visiter. The reader will recollect the original.

"It surprises you, sir? — it did surprise me, from all I had previously heard of Lord Lintern's remarkable character."

"Surprise me, Mr. Graves! indeed it does. Why, this proves the good seed growing up, while some of us slept, and would not believe it. Well, Mr. Graves?"

"Well, sir, upon these instructions, the solicitor and I went to work. We called to our aid two of the most celebrated chemists. We all examined and experimented upon that entry, in a body. We all decided that it was a forgery."

"Good news, good news, indeed. Has Lord Lintern's solicitor yet advised him of the decision?"

"By this night's post he writes to do so. His Lordship will have the letter to-morrow morning. But there is more than the decision to establish the forgery, Mr. Snow. One of the perpetrators of it has been discovered — is in our power — has admitted his crime."

"Does he mention his instigators?"

"Yes. Certain members of Lord Lintern's family."

"And Lord Lintern ——"

"Is free of all suspicion of connivance."

"Have you seen your friend, poor Mutford, since this happy discovery?"

"Since the actual discovery, I have not, sir; but I did see him after the receipt of the letter from Lord Lintern,

and at parting from him, gave my friend a hint that, in a few days, I might have good tidings to send him. Had he not been the over-sensitive, the pendulating, as well as the much-wronged and sore-hearted man he was and is, my hint might have assumed the shape of a piece of formal information. But, as the very first steps of our investigation had not, at that moment, been firmly taken, and, in consequence, as I could not calculate on a positive result in his favour, — though, indeed, my hopes were strong, and on reasonable grounds, too,— I feared, as on a former occasion, to agitate him, perhaps, unnecessarily."

"And again, sir, I approve your caution, though it has doomed your poor friend to some additional days of misery. You have written to him, doubtless, this evening?"

Mr. Snow's last question produced an answer from Graves which greatly distressed that gentleman. It went into a statement of Graves's ignorance of where Mutford now really was; of Alexander Graves's letter, asserting that neither he nor his sister were in the sea-coast village; of Mutford's promise to go thither and protect his sister, who, he averred, awaited him there,— and, pressed by Mr. Snow, Graves could not eventually conceal the late plot against his own life, laid by his unfortunate friend.

Mr. Snow was moved even to trembling. The two gentlemen, equally anxious for almost every person concerned, consulted together as to the best steps to be instantly taken. They finally resolved to travel that night towards Lord Lintern's residence, with a view of presenting themselves, at an early hour, before his Lordship; and, shortly afterwards, they were on the road, seated side by side in Mr. Snow's carriage.

The as-yet-unnamed, the never-to-be-named, and the to-be-no-farther-guessed-at consoler of Mas'r Fox, during the absence of his wife in France, had engaged, upon the day, in the evening of which we have last seen her, to meet Samuel Geeson, at or about the hour of six o'clock, in order to confer with him on important business.

Previous to the appointed hour, something happened to make her change her mind. Yet, as she wished to keep friends with Sam, she set about warning him of her necessary breach of faith, intending to add something which might soothe him in his disappointment.

She went to his mother's wretched abode. He was not at home, nor would the querulous dame give her much satisfactory information as to where he might be found: on the contrary, rising from her crazy chair, by an ill-fed fire, (chiefly composed of small chips and shavings, gained by begging them of the carpenters, to whose craft her son was nominally attached,) she raised her voice in anger against her visiter; rated her for her "foreright boldness" in coming to make such a request to the house of a mother; advanced on her, swelling her tones and her sentences, at every step, and, at length, fairly pushed the intruder over her threshold, and shut the chinky door in her comely face.

The repulsed, little daunted, and wearing an air of tranquillity, which frequent experience of such trials alone could give, paused a moment to think, and then bent her hasty and business-like steps in another direction.

Samuel Geeson was a member of a club or society, of which branches or repetitions may, we believe, be found in many towns and villages of England: one of repute and consideration: "the ringers," in fact. This, his questor knew; and further recollecting that the present evening was distinguished as that of its weekly meeting, when members assembled to practise, with little hand-bells, the important fine art which it sought to cultivate, she arrived in a short time at the house made sacred to its sittings.

Stepping inside the open door of the humble inn, she peered cautiously to one side. Neither the observant hostess, nor yet any one of her exemplary and numerous daughters, was in the bar; Sam Geeson's friend pushed onward, exploringly, therefore, unconscious of fear. The room occupied by the ringers soon denoted itself to her ear, by the regulated harmonious chime of little bells which came from it. She opened the door cautiously, and stood on the threshold, unnoticed, so vivid was the tink-

ling noise, and so abstracted the minds and eyes of the performers.

It was no scene of admiration, or even of novelty, to the spectator: but to a person of another country, or even to an individual of this, whose social place and unadventurous spirit of curiosity have never afforded the opportunity for regarding it, it might have been. Some twenty men, old and young, from grey-headed age down to beardless youth, were sitting, on forms, round a square table, each holding a bell in his hand, and making its tongue strike one blow, as it came to his turn so to do: and thus, blow after blow went round from bell to bell; and round, and round again, in (to the performers' minds) untiring monotony. The chins of all rested on their breasts; the eyes of all were fixed on the table; the lips of all were firmly and eagerly closed — not a word escaped them; the brows of all were bent in the expression of solemn, important, and difficult business. And thus — excepting some moments of application to the porter-pots, or the gin, in the middle of the table — thus they had been occupied for two hours before; and thus, according to the rules of their institution, they were to be engaged for two hours to come.

The observer at the open door knew that she must not "give no interruption," till the peal with which she found them busy should have been repeated a given number of times. As all things must come to an end, however, so did it, and Sam Geeson, who sat nearly opposite to her, was in the act of stretching forth his hand to a pot of porter, — his well-earned comforter, after a long, and, on his part, brilliant "ring,"— when their eyes met, and, at a signal, she turned her back on the threatened recommencement of the music, which — some writer says — is the music of heaven — and, to her great self-congratulation, again accomplished the street without the cognisance of the rigidly-proper, if not ostentatiously-proper, landlady of "The Ringers."

Her friend soon joined her. "It be too soon, old girl," he said.

She knew that as well as he; but, to save him a walk

for nothing, she thought she would just come and tell him that mother wanted her within doors for that night — "but stop now, Sam Geeson, will you — to-morrow even, at the same hour and place, without fail."

Sam, in no exceedingly courteous language, remonstrated, and said "he was put upon," and insinuated, that some other individual had prevailed upon her to "go for a walk;" and, in fact, they parted bad friends.

"Let 's see, now," said Sam, when he had been left alone, and — not wanting the power of remarking, in his own mind, the persons and things that came every day under his notice — he followed, cautiously, his false friend, and housed her, indeed, under the very roof of which he had been thinking.

Vengeance, a pleasant vengeance began to work in his breast. He proposed to himself, with one of his unamiable chuckles, to call upon some neighbours, in whose estimation, as a "serious" man, Mas'r Fox wished to stand very well, lead them to the door, and introduce them when it should be opened.

But his design had scarcely been formed when he was diverted from it. A man came towards Fox's house at a quick pace. Sam stepped back out of sight. The man paused at the door, and he recognised Michael Mutford. None of the 'prentice's passions were very ungovernable. Vengeance — at least in such a case as the present — suggested no sweets to him, if, in the wreaking of it, he lost an opportunity for acquiring — a shilling. And, in consequence of the workings of this admirable constitution and temperament, he now only waited to see Mutford enter the little abode of the little jack-of-all-trades, when he bent his steps to Lord Lintern's. His unfaithful "goer for a walk" escaped his mind altogether; or, did he allow her to trouble him for an instant, she was referred to future measures; if, indeed, upon his return to her present resting-place in an hour, she could not be found at hand.

Making little doubt that Mutford would stay where he was, for a necessary time, Sam's hope was that Lord Lintern might find him there, and, in consideration of being

saved, by the watchful zeal of his agent, from a night journey to Mr. Linnock's, act more liberally than usual,— "a thing to be wondered at, if he does — the miser!" added Sam.

He was right in concluding that his Lordship would be glad to meet Mutford at no greater distance than the village from his own house. He also found his fee "pretty fairish." Lord Lintern and he walked side by side from the nobleman's house. Passing the churchyard of the village, before they could arrive at Fox's, both saw Mutford hastily enter it by the turnstile gate. Sam's partner, after a pause, there dismissed him. The 'prentice began to run to Mas'r Fox's. One hailed him, and, in the conjuring name of the Miss Molly, who found herself in unexpected need of help, directly turned his steps towards the cliff-path. Again Sam's prudence could control his revenge.

Lord Lintern — though, as an unromantic and sneering man, he would, in ordinary circumstances, have declined such a meeting — determined upon following Mutford into the churchyard. "A sentimental cemetery, and the occasion of his coming to it will probably fit *such a boy's nature as his is* to my purpose," was his Lordship's philosophy.

Upon the failure of his plan, he asked himself would he follow Mutford to the farm-house? and he concluded that, after what he had now seen of the unmanageableness of his nephew, such a step must prove useless, while it would provoke unnecessary exposure of his own family affairs in the eyes of strangers. He therefore returned home; and again, it is superfluous to indicate the state of his mind.

Hours afterwards, he was ascending to his chamber for the night. A single knock sounded at the hall-door. He questioned the person abroad; after some words, his attendant opened the door, a strange and uncouth-looking man handed a letter and disappeared. He must have scaled the avenue gate, or the park walls, to get up to the house to deliver it.

Lord Lintern returned into his library to read it. The following were its words: —

"Upon the eve—at the instant of removing myself to a distance which must for ever prevent our meeting, or hearing from or of each other, I write you an answer to a question you proposed to me this evening. It *is* only this instant that it has recurred to my mind. My hatred and my horror of you annihilated it in my mind at the time, and on the spot which some devil of refined cruelty and persecution suggested to you to choose for asking it—but passion rises again within me, and I must control myself.

"Your daughter—yet, first let me tell you, I have been sorely tempted to withhold my answer. It did appear to me a sweet, though a slight retaliation to allow you to think, and *to feel*—as your question imported you had done—that she was in *my* power. The mistake, working on your idea of my character—moulded from your own—would be some torment to you, as long as it should continue. But no. Even yet—even yet, you have not quite, quite brutified me. If not for your sake, for my own—yes, and for hers—though she *is* your daughter—*yours*—I reply, in the simple truth—I know nothing of the present situation of the Lady Ellen Allen. Whatever it may be, I have had no hand in producing it. For many months I have not seen her, nor heard of her. You may not credit these words—indeed I am almost sure you will not—*cannot*—necessarily, from your nature, *cannot*—yet they *are* the simple truth. And I add, as truly, that if any thing unhappy has overtaken her, I shall regret it; for she is very, very unlike her father. But be not alarmed; my regret would chiefly, if not solely, arise from the fact that she once, I believe, pitied my lot, and that I acted ungenerously, furiously (you were in my mind) towards her, in return.

"Farewell—hater and destroyer of me and mine.

"MICHAEL MUTFORD."

This letter Michael had written on board the Miss Molly while she was almost under weigh. His attention had not, indeed, turned towards the subject of it, till he felt himself about to bid good-by to the shores of Eng-

land, perhaps for ever. It will be recollected, that from the moment he left the churchyard till he embarked he had been really whirled about by a succession of squally emotions; nor do we here except even his last hour on land with the Misses Linnock. It had engrossed him as much as any other of that evening or night.

Lord Lintern, notwithstanding the bitter anticipations of its writer, did believe the assertions of the letter. Nor was it by any reasoning he arrived at his conviction; he believed at once: in spite of him. Every word convinced. Even the raving hostility, the overwhelming insult, mixed up with every word, strengthened his involuntary certainty: and had it another effect? did it add to his aversion and impatience of Michael Mutford? — no — it had a contrary effect: strange to say so — but it had. He retired for the night, in a more appeased state of mind than we have yet seen him admit to himself. His daughter Ellen — his last stay for home — was not lost to him. She had not eloped with Mutford. That was all he would consider with reference to her safety. Wherever she had gone, she *was* safe; competently protected. He felt assured she was. As to her aunt's letter, it now took its place with all its predecessors — at least, in his estimation. It did not continue to be wisdom's own text. Rather — and he yawned over its recollection, as he always did over that of its author — it was lumber, rubbish. And no doubt the silly old woman, by stretching his instructions too far, or by unwisely enforcing them to the letter, upon all possible occasions, fit and unfit, *had* given some cause for the disappearance of her ill-used prisoner.

He would seek another interview with Mr. Snow, (and Mr. Snow also now fully returned to his confidence, and, by degrees, to his admiration,)— and soon have Lady Ellen at home again.

And so — the only son of the *dead* Robert Mutford had done him no new injury. Where had he gone? upon what desperate enterprise? Lord Lintern wished he had remained approachable till the arrival of the solicitor's letter from London. After all, *had* he, indeed, been wronged? —and received no manifestation of good or fair

intentions towards him, since the coming of his father's posthumous letter — of which he must have known — into Lord Lintern's hand? No wonder, then, that at the instant of the eternal separation of which the boy had spoken, he should have raved against one who he was sure was — unjust, as well as — upon just grounds — severe. And, for Lord Lintern, these were large admissions.

And the expected communication from his lawyer — that, that, came into his mind every moment; and now, Lady Ellen followed its arrival; and now, Mutford — ay, and his, *his* sister — and now — Augustus. A second time Lord Lintern drew partially aside the curtains of his chamber-window, and looked towards the prison of his eldest son — no light now streamed through its grated window. 'T was long past midnight, and its solitary had gone to rest. "To rest?" questioned Lord Lintern — "will it be as sound as mine?" — One quick, quick thought fled on to another; and before he lay down, that night, Lord Lintern once more returned to his library; re-ascended to his sleeping chamber with a little document before spoken of; read it many times; and, the last time, read it on his knees, from his heart, and for himself: repeating, in its words, a former wish to be made able to believe.

He had given orders, before retiring to rest, that a messenger should demand his letters, in the village, at the earliest hour possible, next morning. Long before that hour, he arose, and, not at rest in the house, went out to walk. In the neighbourhood of his grounds, he encountered his son Augustus, attended by his keepers. The place of meeting was a lonely green lane, very narrow, highly enclosed by bank, hedge, and trees, at either hand, and often winding. At one of its windings, the father and the son suddenly came in view of each other, at but a few yards' distance.

Both started, drew back, and stood still. The habitual hard frown of dislike and despotism knitted Lord Lintern's brow; and his thin tall figure erected and crested itself into the almost theatrical expression of hauteur for which he was remarkable. And he looked to his son for the show

of fitful defiance and impatience which, in all their rencounters during the last year, had used to answer to his own assumption of severity. He saw it not, however. After stepping back, and reddening, and allowing his almost supernaturally bright black eyes to send forth one or two flashes, Lord Allen stood quiet, only that he trembled a little, and growing deeply pale, dropped his eyes on the ground.

Had they met in an open field, or upon a wide road, it is probable they would have passed one another without interchanging a glance, or hesitating, or stopping, or in any way evincing much consciousness. Now it seemed, in the first instance, that each stood still, as if to yield free way to the other, the lane not being broad enough to permit three persons to pass in one direction, and a fourth in a contrary one, without almost personal contact; for Augustus and his keepers always walked on abreast. This became evident by the actions of the father and the son immediately afterwards. Both turned their backs to the same side of the lane, and their pause grew continuous. A second glance at Augustus caused Lord Lintern to end it. He saw before him a calmed, self-controlled, inoffensive, if not humbled and contrite man. His own brow smoothened, his air changed, and he walked forward quietly. The keepers took off their hats to him. He returned their salute. While doing so, he felt something like consternation in perceiving that Augustus also uncovered his head, and stood tranquilly as he passed, his eyes still fixed on the ground. The old man stopped again, and looked in amazement, if in no other feeling, upon him.

"Between *us*, Augustus," he said, unconsciously, "this ought not to be: 't is as bad as — as almost any thing that has gone before it: — no, Augustus, thus it were better" — he took his son's hat gently from his hand, placed it on his head, and adding, — "I am glad to see you better," extended his own hand.

"I thank you, my Lord — I *am* better," he was answered, as Augustus gravely accepted the greeting, "and well enough to be permitted to write to you, now, at least; — may I do so to-day, without fear of having my letter re-

turned? Or shall I find the surgeon, or my attendants, willing to convey it to you?"

"I will answer your question in the course of the day, Augustus," said Lord Lintern—"you may be assured I will; for the present, I can only repeat I am glad you are so much better: good morning."

His son bowed again, and proceeded homeward with his keepers. Lord Lintern called one of them back.

"What is this?" he enquired of the man: "really a change for the better, or only a change from furious into melancholy?"

The keeper was of opinion that it was really a change for the better; and it had been going on for some time, he added.

"And why have I not been so informed?"

It was the surgeon's business to have spoken, the keeper replied; and he took occasion to say, that if such had not been the case, he wondered much, for his own part.

"Let the surgeon call upon me to-day," and Lord Lintern also bent his way towards home.

The servant had come back with letters. He hastily opened one from his solicitor. He laid it down before him on the table, shaking.

For a long while his mind attended to nothing else. Breakfast remained untouched, at his hand. At length his eye fixed on another letter, so large, it might be called a packet. The direction to him was in a woman's, indeed, in a girl's hand, and a young girl's too. He opened it. Under the outside envelope was another, unsealed, directed to Michael Mutford; and between both a letter for himself. This he read eagerly, after glancing at the signature, and ascertaining it to be that of—"Bessy Allen."

My Lord,

It will seem strange to you, that the communication which I made to your Lordship, the last miserable day we met, face to face, had never before been made to my own father, or to my own brother. It will seem as strange, that, since my dear, dear father's death, I have still kept it secret from—it now appears—my only living protector,

Michael Mutford, although, after leaving your neighbourhood, I had the opportunity of doing so. But, if your Lordship does me the favour, nay, the justice to read the accompanying packet, you may find the reasons for my secrecy, hitherto, as well as those which, in my heart and conscience, and after kneeling down, often and often to ask the question, I believe now leave me free to place full confidence in my poor brother.

The packet, as you will observe, is addressed to him. I leave it open, however, to enable you, also, to satisfy yourself, at length, of things which concern you, my Lord, as well as him and me, very closely. Nor is it to insinuate myself into your pity or compassion, nor to call upon your sense of honour, in my regard, that I do this. You have spurned and wronged me once, Lord Lintern, openly, publicly, shamefully, and that once is enough for me. It is killing me, day by day, since:—it, and the cruel, cruel conduct of others—and in a little time will have finished its work. So, I want no reparation from you, or from any one else, even if I would accept it. I only want to prove to my unfortunate brother that I am not as guilty as he thinks me, and to you, my Lord, that I have never, meanly, wickedly, odiously, plotted against your happiness or station in the world. Whether or not others have plotted against me, you will be able to judge,—against me, poor me,—a girl scarce more than sixteen, the only daughter of an unfortunate (and how unfortunate?) gentleman,—and now his orphan daughter;—and the sister of his only son—the last son of his name—the heir of his miseries, and of nothing else—and gone from me,—I know not whither.

Oh, Lord Lintern, little as you expect it, I *do* make one request of you—and 't is therefore, perhaps, as well as for the other reason, that I send my packet to you, first of all:—I *do* beseech you to find out what has become of my dear brother—to use every, every effort to find him out—and, as soon as possible, let him have what I have written to him, and for him. Perhaps it may send him to my side again—and in doing so, oh, perhaps it may turn him from some course that, for my sake,—and it can only be for my

sake, *now*, — he ought not to go upon. Do this, Lord Lintern, and, after all, I will bless you and pray for you.

BESSY ALLEN.

If Lord Lintern had read this letter eagerly, the writing to which it referred him now absorbed his very soul. It moved him, too, more than he had ever been moved before, except, perhaps, upon the occasion of his wife's death. He could not go on with it continuously; often he stopped, sinking back in his chair; often he stood up, and walked, in deep affliction, about the room. It was long ere he completed his perusal of it. And he had not removed it from before him, when a servant entered to announce Mr. Snow, and another gentleman.

Mr. Snow, upon entering the room, saw that he had been shedding tears; and it was with delight and surprise, strangely mingled, that he now received and returned the Earl's warm greetings. In fact, Lord Lintern wrung the hand of the man whom, at their last meeting, he had treated scarcely as one gentleman treats another, even if they stand on terms of hostility. Mr. Snow felt great and natural anxiety to know the cause of such a happy change of manner — indeed of character: he strongly presumed it bore relation to circumstances and persons about which and whom he was deeply interested; but he forbore untimely questions, and contented himself with allowing things to appear of their own accord.

He presented Mr. Graves.

"I have already made acquaintance with Mr. Graves's name, sir," answered the Earl, bowing graciously — "'t is here, in a letter I received this morning."

He presented his solicitor's letter, and resumed, — "And I return Mr. Graves my best thanks for his able assistance in the investigation to which the letter refers."

"I only did my duty, as a professional man, Lord Lintern," said Graves, "urged on, indeed, by my anxiety for the interests and happiness of a dear and long-loved friend."

"Am I to understand, sir, that you mean Mr. Michael Mutford?" Graves assented.

"And that your visit here, this morning, is still in his behalf, Mr. Graves?"

"Yes, my Lord; I consider myself his legal representative as well as private friend."

"In that case, sir,"—Lord Lintern arose,—"in that case, gentlemen, pray wait one moment."

He left the room. The new friends wondered what was to happen. They heard him go up stairs. He returned, carrying a tin box, which he had taken out of his iron strong-box. He laid it on the table, to Graves's hand, put a key beside it, and said,—

"Mr. Graves, you will there find all the title-deeds, and other legal documents, by virtue of which I hold the property of others—or rather have held it. 'T is in my possession no longer. It never could have been, if—if——" his voice changed, and he raised up his clenched hands as he added, vehemently,—"Gentlemen, no matter what my conduct may have seemed in this lawsuit,—no matter how severely I may have seemed to insist upon what I thought my right,—no matter what some have suffered from my hostility, provoked or unprovoked as it may have been,—by the honour, and upon the word and truth of man,—I never, never harboured a suspicion, till a few days ago, that I had succeeded at law by a perjured witness and a forged document!"

"No one has ever thought so, my Lord, no human being thinks so," answered Graves; "on the contrary, every one knows—and gives you credit accordingly—that you have supplied, under your own hand, the first instructions for an investigation of the truth."

"I thank you, again, sir—I thank you, Mr. Graves." The old earl spoke his first acknowledgment, bowing proudly, though not unkindly: at the second he offered Graves his hand. "And now, Mr. Snow, while our friend examines the contents of that box, allow me a word." He took Mr. Snow aside,—"I have lived a long life, already, sir, and to my recollection never did towards man what I now hasten to do before you—I ask your pardon, sir."

"My dear Lord, say no such words; they are, indeed,

unnecessary," replied Mr. Snow, taking his hand, and looking much more confused, if not humiliated, than the penitent himself: —"on my word, Lord Lintern, I remember nothing that can call for this."

"But I do, Mr. Snow; without allusion to any thing that has happened some months ago, I will only say that, last Sunday, I acted towards you as I should not have done; — nay, my whole conduct on that occasion was wrong; my whole thoughts and feelings: I wronged this poor Mutford; he knew, and he knows nothing of my daughter's disappearance; so much I have since ascertained — though I only take him on his own word; — and I wronged her, too, sir, to suppose — at least to assure myself so suddenly — that she could act so very badly. And now, sir, it remains but to say this to you: whenever you write to her — and I pray you, let it be as soon as you can — tell Ellen that her own house is open to receive her, with her own father to welcome her to it, and protect her in it." As he spoke, the old man's heart warmed with the re-flowing feeling of having some one to love him.

"Thanks, thanks, Lord Lintern," said Mr. Snow, again offering his hand — "we all thank you: — we all ought to do so; — but, in one thing only, I venture to gainsay what you require: — I will not — pardon me — but I will *not* write to Lady Ellen, coldly repeating your sentiments towards her; you must write yourself, my dear Lord, — indeed you must; and, to supply you with her present address, there is the letter I had the pleasure of receiving from her last Sunday; — it will inform you where she is; — in France, a little way from the coast; and with whom; with her old and excellent Planche, and Planche's brother, a married clergyman; and you will see that it is Planche you have to blame for finding her out, in Wales, and secretly corresponding with her, and, in fact, arranging the whole little plot of her elopement."

Lord Lintern found, indeed, these facts authenticated in his daughter's letter, as well as the others, for which Mr. Snow had been his immediate authority, last Sunday. "Well; and I will write to her this very post," he said as he handed back the letter to its owner.

"I do believe this box contains all the necessary documents," now interrupted Graves, having finished his cautious, barrister-like investigation of its contents.

"Keep them, then, in trust, for your friend," said the Earl.

"I will, my Lord — and now 'tis my turn to thank your Lordship; and I do so, for the honour, as well as the pleasure, of the trust you repose in me; and also in Mutford's name, for the very prompt and generous way in which, at the instant of proof, you recognise his claim, and put him in possession of his right."

"He would not let you thank me, in *his* name, at least, if he were at hand to prevent you, Mr. Graves."

"Pardon me, my Lord, he would: I know him better than he knows himself; that is, I know him *to be* better than in his late, and, I suppose, present mood, he allows himself, even to himself, to be. There are no hating qualities in Mutford; and so I have often told him, though he would *argue* with me upon the point; — momentary detestation, worked up by rage, I know he is exceedingly capable of; but for hatred — the long, dark, brooding thing which I understand to be hatred — never was a much less competent person. But now, my Lord, having so happily, so very happily, closed our first case, of this morning, will you permit us to pass to another?"

"What other?" — Lord Lintern's hard, even voice failed him, and he slightly changed colour.

"My dear Lord," said Mr. Snow, "if you have read the whole of Lady Ellen's letter, you have found in it an allusion to ——" in his turn, Mr. Snow hesitated; though sure of the Earl's sentiments towards the Mutfords, he feared to mention the name that was on his tongue. Lord Lintern did so for him.

"Allusion to my son — my elder son. Yes, sir, and I was thinking of that."

"Allow us to ask, my Lord ——"

"What you like, sir — what you like, gentlemen" — interrupted Lord Lintern, impatiently, as Mr. Snow paused a second time. In fact, the father saw approaching him the most painful and the most humiliating topic connected

with the whole business in hand, and a twitch of his old arbitrary humour, hitherto always near to save him from self-accusation, and, above all, from admission of great error, now shot across his mind.

"Then, my Lord, have you ever been informed that your elder son procured, from the most eminent medical practitioners in a certain branch, documents at issue with a certificate signed by a gentleman, their avowed inferior in practice, professional rank, and public trust and confidence?"

"Never, sir," answered Lord Lintern, his rising impatience allayed by eager interest.

"Such is the case, however," said Graves.

"And where are those documents?"

"They were given by your elder son, my Lord, to one whom he believed to be a trustworthy person, that they might be conveyed, through me, to you."

"And you have them, Mr. Graves?"

"They never reached me. The person so trusted broke his trust."

"His name, sir?" asked Lord Lintern, evidently in strong misgivings.

"The Honourable George Allen."

"That name again!" cried the father, starting up; "and doubtless," he continued, as if speaking to himself —"doubtless this new piece of treachery occurred a little before the time that he sent me information where Augustus could be found in London — having, as he said, discovered it by chance."

In an absent manner Lord Lintern turned to the window, and gazed out upon the angle of the old green-house, visible from where he stood. The new friends heard him sigh profoundly. They understood, generally, at least, what was working in his breast, and allowing it play, silently awaited his turning round again.

He did so in a short time, and resuming his seat, and passing his hand across his forehead, addressed Graves.

"Doubtless, sir, you know where to find your friend?"

"That brings up our last, and, perhaps, after all, our most important topic, Lord Lintern. I am really quite

ignorant of his movements at present;" and Graves went on to express, though in guarded terms, his great anxiety for his friend's safety, and his hopes that Lord Lintern himself might be able to gratify him with some information on the subject.

The Earl regretted that it was quite out of his power to do so; he did not even admit his having seen Mutford the night before, nor — in deference to the still lingering haughtiness of his nature or his habits — could he bring himself to allude to the leave-taking letter which Mutford had sent him from on board the Miss Molly.

"However," he resumed, after a pause — "there is one in waiting, who, perhaps, may give us some account of him; a man who came to the house, hours ago, to have an audience of me in my magisterial capacity, though I was then too deeply engaged in other matters" (he meant reading Bessy's packet) "to pay any attention to him — and so he was bid to wait; — excuse me now a moment, while I go out to speak with him."

Lord Lintern withdrew. Graves and Mr. Snow congratulated each other heartily, in his absence, upon the good morning's work they had got through. He returned, with a countenance and air of alarm and regret; and, in answer to hasty questions from Graves, communicated the certain intelligence that Michael Mutford had gone across the Channel, the night before, in the capacity of commander of a smuggling lugger.

Both gentlemen heard this news in consternation. Graves started doubts of its truth. Lord Lintern might be misinformed, he said.

"Impossible," his Lordship replied; the person who supplied the information was to be implicitly depended upon; he spoke from the evidence of his own ears and eyes, and, in consequence, in fact, of having been employed by him, Lord Lintern, to learn tidings of Mutford; "and," added his Lordship, "my habits, in public business, if nothing else, make it difficult to impose on *me* by a false story, and *I* believe the man."

"And can your informant say what was the probable destination of the smuggler?" asked Graves.

"Yes — he knew it distinctly — Boulogne."

"I will pursue him this instant!" cried the anxious friend: "we are upon the coast, and surely a boat, of some kind or other, can be procured directly, or at least within some miles, for a good fee." He snatched up his tin box, and with adieus to Lord Lintern and Mr. Snow was leaving the room. Lord Lintern entreated him to stay one moment: then, folding up Bessy's writing in the cover directed to her brother, handed it to Graves, and said, solemnly and impressively, — "The instant you meet him, be sure to give him that; 't is from his sister."

Again Graves was hurrying off, again he was requested to stay: it was Mr. Snow who now spoke — "Wait but till Lord Lintern gives me one line to his daughter — instead of sending it by post, as he intended — and I will accompany you, Mr. Graves."

Lord Lintern sat down and wrote to Lady Ellen a short but sufficient letter, and the moment after he had given it to Mr. Snow, he was alone.

We pay Samuel Geeson the compliment of recurring to him once again.

Mutford was right in believing that Mr. Linnock had not succeeded in conciliating him after the little *exposé* about good Mrs. Fox's purse. The first proof of doggedness which Sam gave was refusing to form one of the crew of the fortunate Miss Molly, upon her that night's voyage. "No," he said, "mother would be a-wanting of him for some time to come: and he didn't know, neither, if she half-liked his going for a smuggler no more; she took it so to heart that he wouldn't give his mind to getting of his bread in as honest a way,— the way he was brought up to:" and after other speeches of about as much import, he strode homeward.

By the light of the moon, from the top of a hill, on the horse-road leading to the sea-side villages, he soon saw what he had come that way to see — for the path through the fields was much shorter for pedestrians; and, increasing

his graceless strides, Sam gave "good night," in a few minutes, to Mrs. Fox, who, to save the hire of a carter, was driving herself, her eggs, and other things, as fast and as well as she could towards her husband's door.

"Good night, Mas'r Geeson," she answered, scarce able to suppress the alarm she felt at Sam's sudden appearance at her side, on so lonely a road, after what had happened — and all her property — to say nothing of the redeemed purse — with her, too.

"That bayn't the way to make him go along, Miss's," resumed Sam, as Mrs. Fox whipped her horse hard, and mismanaged his bridle, so as to induce him to tack from side to side of the road.

"Oh, I'll get him on, never you fear, Mas'r Geeson," she said, again whipping the horse, and then so directing him as to run his nose against a hedge to her left-hand.

Sam laughed inordinately; stepped to her relief; led the horse into the middle of the road, and again assured her she knew nothing of the matter in hand, and that it would be much better for her to allow him to get up, at her side, and drive for her.

"No, no,— much obleeged," she replied, gasping for breath.

"Why, you bayn't afeard, Miss's?"

"Afeard, Mas'r Geeson!" quickly interrupting him — "what would make me afeard o' you, I'd be glad to know?" — and Mrs. Fox tried to laugh, in her turn.

"I didn't say no such thing, Miss's, as what you *be* afeard o' *me;* nor warn't a-going to say it, neither; what would put it into my head? we don't owe one another no ill-will, *I'm* sure;— no; I war only going to ax you if you were afeard I couldn't drive, or didn't know how; but, don't you remember, Miss's, for how long a time I war carter to Farmer Oldbury?"

Mrs. Fox remembered it well, and complimented Sam upon his well-known mastery over the whip, while he held the office spoken of: and it was not any distrust of his skill that induced her to decline his offer; no such thing; she only wished "not to give trouble to nobody, when she could manage for herself:" and so, she whipped her

horse again, and, starting off in a gallop, wished Sam good night.

For a little way, her road was favourable. Anon, it was up-hill again, and heavy and difficult from mire and ruts. As her beast now toiled slowly upward — "I say, Miss's," resumed Sam, as close as ever to her — "that be a shabby trick as Mas'r Linnock has just played me — bayn't it now?"

"Indeed it be, Mas'r Geeson."

"To go for to 'spect me of common robbing of you, Miss's, when he knew as well as you did, it was all fun, like, and nothing else?"

"To be sure, to be sure," assented Mrs. Fox.

"Well," resumed Sam, after a considerable pause, "and if ever I seed such a grand house as the magistrate's, Lord Lintern's, I be blowed, Miss's."

"Quite a grand house, indeed, Mas'r Geeson," — and Mrs. Fox's confidence began to return, at this unexpected change of subject.

"You 've often been t' it, Miss's?"

Often, Mrs. Fox answered, with clothes which she had helped to make up for the family.

"And through it, Miss's?"

"Once through it, room after room," Mrs. Fox admitted: one day when the family were all out, and her friend, Mrs. Halpin, the housekeeper, yielded to her wish to see the splendours of the mansion.

"And be any other room in it so fine as the justice-room, below stairs?" continued Sam.

Mrs. Fox replied that the justice-room was the least grand in the house; that the parlours, drawing-rooms, and even bed-rooms, went beyond her powers of description.

"And the old lord's own bed-room,— the grandest of any, *I* know?"

Yes — of any of the bed-rooms. And, upon this, Samuel gradually and adroitly induced a description of its articles of furniture — and — what Mrs. Fox thought a little odd — its situation with respect to the other rooms, up stairs.

"Well, I be blowed! — see what it be to be rich folk,

Miss's." He allowed himself to ponder a long while, and then suddenly changed the topic a second time.

"And so, Miss's, you be so glad to get home to poor Mas'r Fox, to-night?"

Mrs. Fox, like an honest wife, did not conceal the yearnings of her heart and soul once more to see her husband.

"The same he does by you, *I* know, Miss's."

Yes — Mrs. Fox was sure he would respond her sentiments if he was aware of her being at present on the road to him.

Sam laughed down in his very throat and breast, shaking his shoulders at every low peal. Mrs. Fox begged to be made acquainted with the cause of his mirth.

"Nothing; nothing at all; I was only a-thinking what *you* would be a-thinking, Miss's, as he might be a-doing, to-night, s'posing he don't know (which he don't) you be so near him, Miss's?"

Let her see; sleeping sound in his bed, after putting the young uns to-sleep, first — barring some little job of shoe-mending didn't keep him up later than usual; that was what Mas'r Fox was doing that moment, *she* knew.

Her companion repeated his laugh, coughing through it, and stopping an instant, on the road, to raise up his bent knee, as an accompaniment to it.

Again Mrs. Fox, and now not with a mind at rest, called for an explanation. Samuel gave it in detail. Her cries of astonishment, of anger, of grief, of outraged love and dignity — her cries of real crying — her shrieking fit, at last, disturbed the quiet of the fair night, and of the lonesome and picturesque situation. If ever she had whipped her horse, she whipped him now; and if ever she ran him against the roadside, she ran him now. In fact, great as was the rage in which her big thoughts devoured the road between her and home, she could not make way at all. Sam Geeson thought this a good opportunity for renewing his former offer of kind services; and what with her impatience to be at home, her eventual misgivings of her own skill in driving, and the spirit of confidence engendered by Sam's generous information, all her late dis-

trust of him vanished, and, with him for her charioteer, the little village of her nativity, and of her youthful loves with the ungrateful Fox, soon broke upon her view.

Sam arranged a commendable plan for her as they journeyed along; and upon it she agreed to act, with his kind assistance. The cart and horse were left in charge of the proprietor of a public-house outside the village. They walked quickly arm in arm to the doomed house. Sam posted her, out of view from within, at the jamb of the street-door. He repaired, himself, to the back of the premises. At a window there situated, he knocked loudly.

"Who be there, at this time o'night?" valiantly questioned Mas'r Fox.

"Get up, get up, Mas'r Fox, your woman be on the road from the farm-house with the eggs for the shop! get up!" and Sam thundered at the window-shutter.

"Well, I be blowed!" ejaculated Fox.

"You be, you be, if you knowed but all!" answered Sam.

"How near be she?" demanded the anxious husband, after a short pause, during which Sam caught low, wailing murmurs, and quick whispers, and other slight noises.

"How near? I tell you I passed her, running fast, and she sitting on her eggs in the cart, only a little way outside the village — Get up!"

"Well, I *be* getting up, Sam Geeson, and you've no call to keep thumping and holloring at that 'ere windor."

"Very well, good night," and Sam strode heavily away, in order that Fox might hear him. He had scarce regained his companion of the road at the street-door, when bar and lock began to give signals of its soon being opened: Mrs. Fox settled her portly and tall figure quite upright against the wall, and her fingers worked anticipatingly. Sam also kept out of sight. The door *did* open, and Fox's voice was heard in a whisper, —

"Dart straight across the road like a swallow!"

"Oh, *won't* I?" responded somebody, and the attempt to dart was made.

"Oh, *will* you?" and by a fierce counter-dart, straight

across the doorway, the stalworth Mrs. Fox had that somebody in her hands.

Sagacious reader, it is for you to conjure up to yourself the picture of the scene which followed.

After merely allowing the poor victim of his vengeance to catch a glimpse of him, and merely saying "Old girl, mother be a-wanting you in-doors to-night," Samuel Geeson turned off, chuckling very much, and bent his steps towards Lord Lintern's mansion.

"A little help from our Custom-house, and a little more from this here old miser, and Sam Geeson bids 'em all good-by, for ever and a day, jigger him, if he don't," was Samuel's often-repeated resolve on the road.

Arrived at the porter's lodge, he rang for admission up to the house, on particular business, which could not be delayed: a voice inside the lodge sharply answered that it must; that Lord Lintern never received any one on business after a certain hour each day, not to speak of such an unseasonable hour of the night; that every one in the house was a-bed; that every honest person out of it ought to be; and, finally, as is usual on such occasions, the claimant for admission was well rated, and commanded to go about his business.

"For all that," said Sam to himself, apostrophising the house, as he glanced towards it,—"for all that, old chap, I sleep under your fine blue-slate roof to-morrow night, if I can't this here night;" and full of serious reverie, he walked to a spot from which, without observation, he could contemplate the front of the mansion, number its windows, and conjecture which of them had the honour of admitting the daylight into Lord Lintern's sleeping-chamber.

While thus engaged, a man whom he knew walked hastily, though stealthily, up to the avenue gate, and there paused a moment. He was, in fact, a supernumerary in the service of the Miss Molly.

"Well, now!" ejaculated Sam's mind, "if another has had the same thought with me, and comes to take it out o' my head, while I be a-coaxing of it!"

He continued to watch his friend. The man pulled off

his old hat, took a letter out of it, looked at the letter, put it up again, and then cautiously clambered over the gate, and disappeared along the shade of the avenue.

Sam's suspicions were much allayed. They vanished entirely, and left him comfortable, when the bearer of Mutford's letter to Lord Lintern re-appeared, running to the gate, again cleared it, and continued running towards the village.

Soon after breakfast-hour, next morning, he presented himself at the door of the house he so much wished to sleep a night in, and asked to see Lord Lintern. We know he was refused an immediate audience. Sam could wait, however.

It was the middle of the day when Lord Lintern came out to him to ask if he knew any thing about Michael Mutford. After the departure of Graves and Mr. Snow, Lord Lintern remained more than an hour, without sending out for him. Even this did not make the 'prentice very impatient. "It does as well, if not beter, the later I see him," he reflected.

At length, as the winter-day waned late, Lord Lintern came out of his library, into the hall. Sam stood up, off a form, and, slicking down his whitish hair on his forehead, bowed clumsily, and coughed, to challenge his Lordship's notice. The Earl stopped short at seeing him, as if he had quite forgotten he had been in waiting, and then commanded him to pass into the library.

It was to give information of where and when the Miss Molly could be come upon, the next night, that he called, he said.

"You must give your information at the Custom-house. It is not my business to catch smugglers," answered Lord Lintern, perhaps with a dislike to interest himself in an affair which might affect the safety of Michael Mutford.

Sam knew that very well. But he was suspected, and watched, and he declared, to be seen going near the Custom-house would be as much as his life was worth.

"Write to them, then."

Sam shuffled on his feet, again smoothed down his

locks over his forehead, and lamented his ignorance of the art of writing.

"Well, get some one to write for you."

"That would be discovering on hisself foreright;" but if his Lordship would write, or call; trusting no other person with the secret — that was all the applicant required.

Lord Lintern, viewing the thing required at his hands as rigorously a part of his duty as a magistrate, demanded the particulars; took a note of them from Sam's dictation, and promised to communicate with the Custom-house authorities early next morning.

Still the 'prentice stood where he was, and showed no symptoms of going away.

"Your business is ended, I think?"

"Yes, so far," Sam was thankful; "but there was just one other little request he had to make of his Lordship, and he depended on his Lordship's goodness to take it well of him. He had mentioned how closely watched he was, and certain people had seen him coming up to the house to-day; and he did not know who might be waiting for him along the road; and, in fact, he had fears for his life, particularly as the road was lonesome, at parts, and the evening would soon fall, and——"

"Do say, in a word, what you want me to do, sir," interrupted Lord Lintern: "my time is precious."

In a word, then, the applicant was afraid to venture homeward at present; and if his Lordship would give orders to let him stay in the house that night — the only house in the parish where he could be safe — the life of an innocent and an honest lad might be his own.

Thus appealed to, and anxious to get himself free of the business before him, Lord Lintern rang his bell, and Samuel was soon taken under competent protection for the night.

To gain this point he had slightly strayed from the strict truth, only two or three times, in his statements to the Earl. First, when he averred that he was suspected and watched, for, in reality, none of his friends were yet aware of his intentions towards them; secondly, when he alluded to the Custom-house as a place to which

he had not been, — for, in reality, there he had been, slily, before he arrived at Lord Lintern's that morning, ay, and did not quit it without a manifestation of Custom-house gratitude in his pocket; and, thirdly, when he had bewailed the neglected state of his education in regard of writing; for, in reality, Sam could put letters together, after a manner.

The time that Lord Lintern had kept the 'prentice waiting, after the departure of Mr. Snow and Graves, he had occupied in writing a letter to his son Augustus, or rather in trying to write one. He began his task many times, and as often gave it up; after having proceeded some way with it, sheet after sheet was blotted, torn, and flung into the fire.

Notwithstanding the considerable change in the Earl's character. enough of his old leaven remained within him to make the task a difficult one. He wrote, if he wrote at all, to conciliate. Conciliation could not appear without admissions of error; and these, from such a father to such a son, after all that had happened, were gall and wormwood, — hair-cloth on his body, ashes in his mouth.

He often started aside, too, in his efforts, and put down his pen at another view of the case. Was it yet demonstrated that Lord Allen had not been mad? Was it yet demonstrated that he did not continue so? As had before occurred to Lintern that morning, his calm and *triste* manner might only be a subsiding for a time of furious delirium into melancholy madness, and who could tell how soon the treacherous quiet might again break out in fury?

True, Augustus was not mad, merely because he had reported the confession of the perjured witness; it now seemed most probable that such a confession had been made. But had there not been other and more glaring symptoms of mental derangement, upon which the doctor had grounded his certificate? — savage violence, personal opposition to his father, jumping out through a window,

running away from home, to say nothing of the wasteful and unmeaning extravagance in money matters, which little less than madness could account for?

It was at a repeated consideration of these alarming facts that Lord Lintern abandoned his pen, in uncertainty and impatience, left his study, and passed into the hall, as we have seen him do.

After re-entering it with Sam Geeson, and disposing of that individual, he recollected, for the first time, since morning, that he had given orders for the appearance before him of the village surgeon. This he grappled at as a stay and guidance, in his present wavering state of mind. He rang his bell to know if Mr. Witson was in waiting. The gentleman had just entered the house. "What! and only then entered it, that day?" — and Lord Lintern relieved himself by inveighing against the disrespectful tardiness of Mr. Witson.

We wish to account for the surgeon's late visit, so far as it seems possible to do so.

"Emily, my dear," he said, to his pale and pregnant lady, as they sat together at breakfast, in one of the apartments of the old green-house, adapted, at Lord Lintern's expense, to their convenience, — "Emily, my dear, this has been a useful patient to us."

Emily, in the act of drinking a cup of tea, shook her head gravely, in assent.

"I find, by looking over the books, that he has done more for us, within the year, than the surgery, and the lad in the village, and my occasional patients together."

"I told you it would be so, Witson."

"And what d'you think of losing him?"

"Losing him?" and the anxious spouse laid down her cup and saucer, and looked at her husband; "why should we lose him? What can any one bring against us on his account? What have we left undone that it was our duty to do towards him? Has he ever got loose since *we* were sent in here to take care of him?"

"'Tisn't that, Emily, my dear; — but, somehow, his father begins to think that he won't have need of our taking care of him much longer."

"What, Witson!" Emily continued, in alarm. "Any thing of that letter to you from his brother, which, I must say as I always said, you lost so very stoopidly?"

"I don't know, my dear: I only know that one of the keepers, Richards, has just told me of a meeting between our patient and Lord Lintern, this morning, and of something the old man said to Richards afterwards;" and at the request of his wife, Mr. Witson rehearsed what we are already acquainted with.

"Well, and is that all? and what's there to be afeard of, in that? Go over to the old man the first thing after breakfast, — go directly!"

"And go, still of the same mind on the case, Emily?"

"Why not? what questions *you do* ask! — what should change your mind?"

"I will, then;" and Mr. Witson valiantly manned his little cringing, nervous manner, and tried to strengthen the feeeble, ever-smiling expression of his round, soft, vacant face, as he drew on his boots to wait on Lord Lintern.

He was approaching the hall-door when the appearance at it of Graves and Mr. Snow drove him back, in trepidation, to his spouse. He knew, they both knew, that one of the gentlemen had long been leagued with Lady Ellen, and even with his patient, to procure certain testimonials; they knew also something of the fate of the documents which Augustus had forwarded to Graves, but which had never been received by the barrister; and, therefore, the visit of the two gentlemen to the Earl now imparted to them a common alarm. Not that they could decide who Graves was: *had* they recognised him as the man of law of whom they had heard, their tremours would, perhaps, have better answered our purpose; they only set him down, in their own minds, for one of the eminent medical practitioners, who had certified Augustus's sanity, now ferreted out, and produced before Lord Lintern, by the officious Mr. Snow.

"I need not *go*, now, of my own accord, Emily — I shall soon be sent for," said Witson, sinking in a chair.

After railing at his want of spirit, though she shared his misgivings, Mrs. Witson called her husband to a consult-

ation, and the best measures to be taken, under the circumstances, were agreed upon, in case he should be sent for.

No summons arrived; Graves and Mr. Snow were seen taking their departure; Mr. Witson and his Emily partially recovered their courage. It was all a false alarm, she said, and he ought not now to lose another moment in waiting upon Lord Lintern.

Again the poverty-stricken surgeon was about to issue forth. His good genius possessed him with another fear: a fear of the keeper, Richards. That man had reported to him certain occurrences of the morning, in a very expressive way; and, with the permission of his wife, he went to confer with Richards.

The man was sitting alone, in a little ante-chamber, immediately outside Augustus's study. Genial spirits, or even dissimilar ones, having a thought in common, soon come to an understanding. Richards had found the letter which Mr. Witson had lost, and he would send it in to Lord Lintern if he was not paid a specific sum. Future distress stared Witson in the face, if he complied with the terms; but, to avoid the greater horrors of exposure, he did give the money and got up his letter.

"All right, now, sir," said Richards; "and I hope this be not the last little trifle of cash will come into your hands as well as mine for our future care of your patient."

Witson returned to his wife, hoping to be praised for what he had done. Her shrewd natural sense made her look beyond the present patched-up arrangement, and now, with grounds to stand upon, she wholly changed her views of the measures to be taken. In the power of Richards, she saw that she and her husband could not sleep securely a day. He either would continue to tax them, or, upon the promise of a good bribe, betray them to the friends of Lord Allen; and a third time she commanded the surgeon to attend his patron, but now with new instructions, and in reality he went.

After waiting, impatiently and contemptuously, till Mr. Witson should have done cringing inside his study-door, and have slid himself nervously upon a chair, Lord Lintern, abruptly enough, asked the question he wished to have answered.

"Is your patient better or worse, of late, sir?"

"Better, much better, my Lord."

"*How* much, Mr. Witson?"

"Why, really, my Lord — as to exactly and justly *how* much, your Lordship will surely see that a country practitioner, merely ——"

"Can speak his own mind, sir, at least — and I ask no more — I do not wish to make you accountable for the minds of other men."

"Then, my Lord, to speak my own mind, justly, — that is — my own mind, of myself, and not ——"

"In a word, sir, pray tell me, is Lord Allen, in your private opinion — there, sir — allow me" — Lord Lintern handed a bank note — "insane or not, at present?"

"Certainly not *insane*, my Lord," dwelling on the word, as if to reserve to himself a case for refining away, in future, though no good to come of such a course presented itself to his weak mind.

"Excuse me, Mr. Witson — *not insane*, I conclude to mean *sane*, being no metaphysician, in such cases at least; and now, sir, permit me another question — for *how long a time* has my son *not been* insane?"

"Why, upon my word, my Lord, justly ——"

"For a day, sir?"

"Oh, yes, my Lord; for more than a day, certainly."

"For a week?"

The week, after sufficient hesitation, was admitted. A month was admitted. Three months. Six months. Lord Lintern's withering rage — withering to such a man as was before him — arose; he started from his chair, imprecating: the unfortunate Witson stood up, along with him, and, barely not kneeling, held out a letter and said, —

"Read that, my Lord, considering first what I have to say — I only urge two things on your Lordship — I was and am a struggling man; and, as I said before — and as you know — a country practitioner only; and, no matter what I might have thought, myself, from my own personal observations — there was, in the first case — I mean the second case — the certificate, certainly, of a well-known gentleman in town — and then, my Lord — then, as you will see ——"

"As I *do* see, base creature!" interrupted Lord Lintern, trembling with passion — he had been reading the letter. "Yes, as I do see; you have taken a bribe from the brother, sir, of your poor patient; and, upon that, and the promise of another, you have permitted me — you, and the London murderer, your fit colleague — tell me, sir! on your life! by your fear of my vengeance! answer me, this moment! when, at my instance, your young correspondent — he who had the heart and mind, young as he is, to pen this letter, though, I believe, under counsel from others — when he, Mr. Village Surgeon, was about to go up to town for a doctor — did he, or did he not, sir, ask your advice beforehand? He did! you need not answer! you look it! My God, my God! what an accursed plot this is! Out of my way, man!" and, as Witson once more attempted to speak, Lord Lintern passed him, left the house, and rapidly walked towards the prison of his elder son.

Not noticing the keepers whom he met in the ante-chamber, he made way at once into Augustus's sitting room. He had not put on a hat on leaving his house, and the wind had blown his grey hairs about his face, and given to it, along with his passion, an unusually high colour. From a table, at which preparations had been made for his frugal dinner, Augustus turned, and looked with amazement to his father. The young man had been sitting, abstractedly, his head resting on his hand, and he was carefully, and even elegantly dressed, for the hour of dinner. Lord Lintern checked his hasty step, and his stern air changed, the moment he entered the little apartment, and had glanced at his son, and then around him. Lord Allen arose, and stood erect before him.

"I keep my promise with you, Augustus," said Lord Lintern; "I answer your question of this morning, before the day has quite gone down: will you give up your dinner here, to-day, and dine with me? Your arm, if you are willing" — he motioned. Augustus, as if not able to speak, hastily gave his arm; his father took it eagerly; clung to it, led him through the ante-chamber, and saying to the keepers, "No person waits on us," issued from the

sad prison-house, and walked with Augustus, hastily, and in perfect silence, across the lawn.

The astonished servants of his household saw him lead his son up to a drawing-room. The moment they entered it, he called loudly for lights. When those were brought, the attendant noticed that Augustus stood leaning against a sofa, looking downward, while his father walked hastily about the room. Neither spoke a word.

In fact, not a word had yet been spoken between them since they had left the old green-house together; and after they were left alone by the servant who brought in the lights, (and strange were Lord Lintern's sudden motives for so loudly ordering lights, the moment he found himself with Augustus in a darksome room,)—still they remained silent.

"Sit down, Augustus," said Lord Lintern, at length, as he still paced the room.

Augustus obeyed. Whenever he had an unobserved opportunity, his eye followed his father; and he said, at length, in a low, deep tone, at which his father thrilled, — "Something has happened to agitate your Lordship."

"Lordship!" The father took a lamp from a table, beckoned him to his side, held up the lamp to a full-length portrait, and asked,—"Who was that?"

"My mother, my good mother," answered Augustus.

Lord Lintern replaced the lamp, stood before him, and, while their eyes met, asked again, — "And I, Augustus, was her husband?" His hand moved irresolutely at his side.

"And my father," added the young man.

"*Then?*" Lord Lintern motioned towards the picture; Augustus quickly understood that he meant — "*was* your father, while *she* lived?" and to the question he replied, after another look into Lord Lintern's eyes, and a self-assurance that they were fortunately, though, as yet, mysteriously changed towards him, "and you *are*."

Their hands touched, as never before they had touched; gradually they felt each other's pressure and grasp; the old man passed his left hand once or twice along the right arm which his right hand detained; it rested on his son's

shoulder; his worn cheek reclined on it, his worn cheek pressed the all but as worn one of Augustus: the son heard a small checked piercing sob; his arms surrounded his father; and the tears of his father, which he felt on his face, obliterated the whole past in his heart.

All the words they had as yet spoken have been reported; and they sat, side by side, before the cheerful fire, Lord Lintern's hand on Augustus's knee, and Augustus's on it, placed there by his father, still quite silent, until the notice to dinner. Then they went down stairs, arm in arm, and confronted one another at the table which for some time had not had a second guest, and the ordinary words which pass at dinner between the guardians of separate dishes were the first that they unconstrainedly interchanged. It was not very antique, then, to ask to "take wine" at dinner; the inquisitive attendants watched them as they raised their glasses, and read their hearts in their mutual smile.

Lord Lintern praised the wine. Augustus agreed that it was very good, and followed his father's example in filling another glass. He did not notice that his father's looks expressed doubt, if not disapprobation of this quick drinking on the part of an invalid, at least of one who, for a long time, had not been used to the excitement of wine. And Lord Lintern could scarce hinder himself from going on to reflect, that if the slightest tendency to mental wavering had really ever afflicted his son, the present indulgence might perhaps revive it. So ridden had he been by the conviction of Augustus's insanity, that he could not even yet distinctly throw off the impression. Always carried away by impulses, it had seemed to him, indeed, as clear as the daylight, after the detection of Witson, that the young man was, and ever had been, in his perfect senses; but now that the passion of that moment had subsided, he was not able to keep himself fixed to certainty.

There was a peculiar, perhaps an unique power and quickness in Augustus's large jetty eyes; a depth, at one moment, as if his thoughts were material rays, and had hidden themselves in the chamber of vision; and a flash, the next moment, as if they had suddenly matured themselves to

expression, and burst out, dispersing and manifesting themselves in splendours of light. It was glorious to look upon them, if the spectator felt no misgiving of the perfect sanity of the mind they illustrated. Yet, on the other hand, if such a misgiving existed, those magnificent eyes were calculated to confirm it; and, in the doubt in which Lord Lintern now watched them, we may decide which of the two effects they produced.

He resolved to drink no more wine that day at dinner, lest Augustus should follow his example. He called for water. Augustus did so too. This was a relief, yet Lord Lintern did not sit quite at his ease.

He began general topics. He spoke of literature: Augustus answered him eloquently, enthusiastically. Lord Lintern could detect no wandering, but the eloquence and the enthusiasm were a little too much for him.

Politics came round. After a few general theories, applicable to all civilised countries, all civilised people and their governments, Augustus showed no interest in the subject. His father did not like that. Even at Augustus's age, he thought a sound mind would not turn away from politics, in apprehension, it seemed, of its own want of patient power to divide and comprehend, in detail, a dry but all-important topic. But he mistook: Augustus turned from that topic only in an indifference which was the result of, for his age, a close examination of it.

Lord Lintern hesitated if he should start another subject, the test, he believed, of mental soundness; his own favourite one; his metaphysics. At length he resolved to do so. He was met with great talent, reading, individual thinking, and temper. For some time the father and son seemed to make way together. Anon they differed — materially, radically. Lord Lintern did his best to keep his ground and his good-humour together; Augustus, without a change in his always vivacious manner, edged him off it, inch by inch. When nearly beaten, he recollected that, virtually, Augustus's system much resembled parts of Mr. Snow's sermon, although all religious illustrations were kept out of view. He grew silent and thoughtful.

Augustus also became silent. It would appear that,

under present circumstances, he controlled himself from broaching any topic, or asking any question which might lead to one, leaving the choice and direction of the conversation wholly to his father.

It was growing late, and they sat together, since the metaphysical discussion, saying little to one another. Lord Lintern fixed his eyes on Augustus's brow, as the young man held his head downward. For some time the father remarked that, shade after shade, emotion had been stealing over his son's features. He became, at length, pale and red by turns, drew in his lip, breathed hard, and sighed profoundly. Lord Lintern's former fears returned upon him. Augustus addressed him, without raising his eyes.

"Dear father——" he paused.

Lord Lintern enquired, "Well?"

"This night, I have not asked you a single question."

"And, perhaps, you have acted kindly, as well as prudently, Augustus, for this night."

"Though I have a good many to ask you."

"I know, Augustus, I know."

"And not any that would pain you — not any about the past — at least, about what *you* know of *my* past."

"Well, well, let us array all our questions and answers for the morning."

Augustus did not resume for some time; at length he said,—"But surely I may enquire after my sister Ellen?"

"Oh yes," answered Lord Lintern, giving up a rising impatience of not being implicitly obeyed, as the subject proposed caused him a sudden sensation of pleasure: "oh yes; she is well."

"In the house?"

"No; but coming home to see us."

"And my other sisters?"

"Augustus! do favour me—do *spare* me this evening."

"Well; no more about my other sisters, then. As to" — his voice broke, he spoke hoarsely, and strong emotion possessed him;—"as to my brother George—I hope, I hope he is not in the house—I hope I may not see him in it; at least, till I hear from him—hear that he has

uttered words which he ought, even for his own sake, to utter. Bad, bad brother!" he continued, sinking his head on his hands: then he suddenly sprang up,—"But pardon me, father! I do not obey your request—I do not spare you; but when you know—when you know that, the last time he and I met in town, my hands were on his throat! that he forced me to lay hands on him! That —but this is not the way to get myself pardoned for not attending to you this evening. Good night, father:" he advanced suddenly, and seized his father's hand, and then left the room.

Lord Lintern, though aware, from another and a recent source, of the secret which Augustus was bursting to communicate, did not refer all his agitation to his natural feelings. He had been so accustomed to link together, in Augustus's conduct, vehemence and insanity, that the scarcely controlled burst which he now witnessed called up strong apprehensions in his mind. He regretted that he had so soon emancipated him from the authority of his keepers: he felt half disposed to send for them again, and commission them to sleep in the house; and the strong improbability of their being in the way was his chief reason for rejecting the thought.

Horrible fears possessed him at length! Horrible fears, sitting alone in his spacious and splendid apartment! Fears which he strove to chase away, but which fastened on him! He chilled under them till he shook with cold, and unconsciously wheeled himself in his luxurious chair to spread his wasted limbs and hands over the half-spent fire.

A noise reached him from some remote part of the house—he held his breath; though faint and indistinct, he construed it into loud voices and shrieks. With a tremulous hand he pulled the bell. A servant entered and reported that it was only Sam Geeson laughing, himself, and making the maids in the laundry laugh at his good stories. Lord Lintern stormed. The servant was leaving the room. He enquired if his son had retired for the night. Yes—the man had lighted him to his chamber. "What chamber?" Its situation was described. "Did he seem well and calm?" The servant feared not; his face looked

flushed, his eyes troubled, and he was now pacing up and down the chamber.

At a late hour Lord Lintern went up to his own chamber. He carefully locked his door. He was going to place pistols under his pillow. Nature cried out shame upon him, and he did not.

He lay down, exerting all his mind to banish far away from him the horrible fear! By comparing circumstances, by accusing himself of harsh suspicions, by prayer — yea, now, by prayer to a God — he strove to banish it. He could not. In the unnerving stillness of the night, it grasped his heart closer. Augustus was still mad! and, once, his father had attributed to his madness, and to his hatred, an atrocious intent! and he was now free to execute it! within a chamber of his father — and a frail door nothing against his young strength, made gigantic by delirium! True, he had seemed affectionate and calm before and after dinner; but he could not control himself to the last, and the vehement pressure of his hand at parting was not natural — was forced — and covered a purpose!

Still, even in the midst of a repetition of such thoughts, the wretched father slumbered. But slumbered only to see over him, in his bed, in all the vividness — in the all but truth of night-mare — that knitted brow, those devouring eyes, and that hand raised.

He awoke groaning, and sat up. He strove to assure himself he had but dreamed. He felt the curtains, he listened to the ticking of his watch, on a table. A sensation of blessed relief began to steal over his mind. It was quickly chased away by reality.

He heard stealing steps from his son's chamber towards his own. He distinctly heard them, though they were very soft, cautious, and with long intervals between each. They stopped at his door. The lock which he had secured was tampered with — it gently shot back, the door opened — he sprang out of bed, and rushed towards the intruder, screaming out — "Parricide! monster! father-killer!" They closed and struggled in the dim light of the setting moon.

"Father!" exclaimed Augustus, now rushing into the chamber — "father, *I* am *here!* — oh, could you, could

you think it! Villain — my father!" he tore Sam Geeson from the old man, who instantly fell on the floor, and now there was a new struggle. Geeson was powerfully strong, but young Augustus also possessed strength, the strength of activity; no man he had yet met could run or leap with him — he twisted the 'prentice down — at the moment received a pistol ball in the flesh of the fore-arm — and would have been overpowered, in his turn, had not servants entered, and thoroughly secured Samuel for the county gaol.

At the noise of the shot Lord Lintern recovered his presence of mind, and staggered, supported by a servant, to his son's side. His son, seated on a chair, was weeping. The old man knelt, and, by a light held to him, examined the wound. It bled amply: he muttered to himself, and looked up into Augustus's face.

"'Tis nothing," said Augustus — "a flesh-wound merely — see:" — he raised his arm, and moved and stirred it in every direction.

"It must be bound up though, till the surgeon comes," answered Lord Lintern. He got a handkerchief, and performed the office himself, still muttering. He ordered a messenger to go for the surgeon, and every one to leave the room.

Again they were alone, father and son. The tears of Augustus still dropped on his father's hands.

"It is painful to make you weep so," said Lord Lintern.

"It? It, father, make me weep? No, no; but——"

"*I* have: I said *those words*," interrupted the old man; "but, I ask you to pardon me, my son, for saying them: I raved, out of my sleep; and, Augustus, 't is *I* have been mad, I believe — 't is *I* have been wrong — 't is *I* have hated *you*——"

"And you do still?"

"Why, see, my boy, see this" — pointing to the blood, and smiling (he had been weeping) — smiling piteously up into Augustus's face — "here is your blood freely spilt for me, and you ask me *do* I, still?"

"Oh God!" Augustus gave way to a real crying fit —

" Oh, God be thanked ! I could have emptied my veins to have you say that !"

Next morning they spoke confidentially together, and took a journey in consequence, together also.

On the road to the village from Lord Lintern's house, Mr. Snow and his companion made arrangements for travelling immediately. To occupy the time as well as possible, they separated in the village, Mr. Snow to have post-horses ready, Graves to make one or two hasty calls, near at hand.

Great was his brother Alexander's surprise, to see the barrister enter his tower, with a tin box under his arm.

" Wax, and a light, first, Lieutenant," said Graves, after greetings. They were supplied to him. He took out of his pocket a knot of professional tape, which he had purchased on his way to the tower, coiled it round the important box, sealed it, and committed his treasure to the temporary charge of his brother, having shortly explained to him what it contained, and how it had got into his possession.

" The next thing is to make out the right owner," he continued — " and for that reason, Alexander, I cannot stay a moment longer with you."

" You do not expect to find him in this latitude, I suppose, Dick ?" asked Alexander.

" No ; but I hope between here and London." — The barrister would not hint to a blockade lieutenant, though his own brother, Mutford's present situation.

" You are close with me, Richard," resumed Alexander ; " but, whatever you may know of poor Mutford, I know as much — and perhaps more too."

His brother looked at him, as he would have done at a witness whom he longed to cross-examine.

" Harkee, Dick — if you really have a clue to him, don't neglect it a moment — I may miss some single letter or other of my duty, my responsibility, and all that, on this

confounded service, in what I am going to say — yet I will tell you that the paltry Custom-house here has him set, and that I am the very man commissioned to look after him to-morrow night, or the next, at a certain hour and place."

Richard Graves looked petrified, so far as a barrister, even a young one, can.

"That would be disagreeable duty for you, indeed, Lieutenant: we must only endeavour to save you from it: so, good-by."

He left the tower, and on his way back to the village, walking very fast, made a little soliloquy: — "Sam Geeson? known to me in story, though never yet personally? No. I don't like Mutford's account of him. He shall have no confidence of mine. Let me see, then. Lilly White himself? — The Farm-house of which I have read must be a good way off, and I 've no time for it. Hold — that merry-hearted little fellow, at whose self and steeds, on paper, 'Polly, Miss's,' and 'Harrit, Miss,' I have laughed, ere now — yes, he must do: his name? his name? oh, I remember,"—and to the dwelling of Mas'r Fox our barrister enquired his way.

As it was winter, and few "visiters" remaining at the seaside, Fox's fly rested under its shed, and Graves, therefore, found him at home. He was seated in a remote corner of his house, (the counterpane, which at night made two apartments of it, being removed,) upon a shoemaker's stool, mending his wife's shoe. Graves now thought Mutford an indifferent portrait-painter. No smiles, no levity marked Mas'r Fox's features, and his manner was *triste* enough. Graves looked closer, and began to comprehend, though only generally, and excuse Mutford. Adown and across his cheeks were certain red marks; one of his eyes feebly winked through a bed of blue and green contusion; his under lip seemed also to have suffered some short time ago; and before him, though with the distance of the apartment between them, sat his tall robust wife, her arms folded, and, at the moment Graves entered, her tones loud and expressive. Our friend caught one sentence — a pro-

verb — "Yes, *my* man; yes, as often as the pitcher goes to the well, 'tis cracked at last."

Considerable was Mas'r Fox's joy even for the temporary call from his stool-of-repentance, occasioned by Graves's visit. He jumped up, in something like his former agility and briskness, and with an abhorrent twist — an effort to grin — on his displaced features, went out after the barrister to speak a word with him in the street.

Graves stated himself to be a friend of a friend of his, Mr. Mutford, and he wanted to see Mr. Mutford on urgent business; in fact, he had very good news to tell him.

"Yes, s—ir," assented Fox, so far.

"I know where he has gone," continued Graves; "I know he crossed over from the coast to Boulogne last night; but you must tell me what house or houses in Boulogne the friends of the Miss Molly usually put up at?"

"I be blessed," began Fox, and, obviously to Graves, with a secret dread of a revenue officer in disguise, he continued by denying all knowledge of every thing he had heard our friend say.

Graves engaged to prove to him that he had nothing to fear from speaking out. He informed Fox that their mutual friend, Mutford, had, long ago, made him acquainted with the name and qualities of the fly-charioteer; and he went on with anecdotes of old times, until Mas'r Fox tittered, hideously, full assent, and finally whispered the information demanded at his hands.

In a few minutes afterwards Graves and Mr. Snow were on the road out of the village, though still close by the coast, going at the best rate of four English post-horses. Along with getting the postilions in readiness, Mr. Snow had looked over the newspapers, London and provincial, of the last four days, taken in by different friends of his, and congratulated himself upon ascertaining that, at a sea-port only about ten miles' distance, a steam-boat would that day cross to Boulogne. He and his friend only feared they might be too late for it, and the postilions were urged to make haste. They were in time, however; and at about half-past one found themselves aboard, wind and tide in their favour, though the wind was high.

Sea, Sea, thou art no flatterer! only catch, in a packet-boat, huddled together, specimens of every rank and character under the sun — the lord and his lady, and the wandering Savoyard and his nut-brown helpmate; or ex-king, and valet out of place; a London mantua-maker going for the fashions to Paris, and a Duchesse de Berry going to give the fashions at Lulworth; a sighing lover, who abhors every thing unrefined, and his abstruse-brained neighbour, who, after one look at his lack-a-daisical expression, thinks him an ass; delicate beauty, and *brusque* ugliness; the poor little governessed girl in her first 'teen, and the tyrant at whom she trembles; the toddling infant, the iron-framed man, the white-haired sage; the dandy and the sloven; the poetical youth who loves thee, in verse, and the mercantile traveller who only crosses thee; the virtuous, the vicious; the man of the world, and its novice: these and more, only let them be yielded up to thee, when the cat-o'-nine-tails of a good south-wester (that will do) lashes thy back, and, providing them with land-stomachs for thee, thou wilt not, honest, honest Sea, spare one! Even as in the cradle first, and in the grave at last, they shall be equal unto thee, — ay, and in the eyes and in the ears of one another! Thou wilt bring them all down, logical and convincing, as well as impartial Sea, to one common level of human misery! Grovelling equals they shall be upon thy bosom of many undulations! Unceremonious, unclean, abominable, and hateful, all in a row, or all in a heap, or, at least, all within the space of a few planks, together!

For this, honest, honest Sea, art thou to be loved.

It was Graves's first trip from his island, and he suffered to excess: to such an excess, indeed, that, in the few intervals of anguish and despair, he permitted his unbrooking English head to get impatient; and then he laughed at himself for his absurdity.

However, he and the more patient Mr. Snow were, after escaping up the step-ladder, soon screamed at, and gesticulated at, and pulled about, by the most impudent jackals of the Boulogne hotels, old and young, junior waiters and *les commissionaires;* (oh, the grand names for things of

our neighbours !) and, in as short a time as possible, the friends parted, Mr. Snow engaging a cabriolet to take him out to Lady Ellen's present residence, about four miles from the town, and Graves bending his steps to the "hotel," preferred and loved, according to Mas'r Fox, by the wellwishers of the Miss Molly, during their occasional visits to Boulogne. The commissioner who conducted him thither, when, to free himself of the crowd of bawling, scowling, declaiming fellows on the *quai*, or pier, he had roared out the hotel's name, "and be d——d to you all!" spoke English tolerably well, and assured him he would find himself comfortable, inasmuch as it was "Englis huss, and Meesteres Smit" (Mrs. Smith) "Englis 'oman."

Graves found it, in reality, a small house (for a hotel) in a mean street; and when he entered it, dirty, noisy, vulgar. He sighed at the thought of Michael Mutford sitting down to eat or drink, or lying down to sleep, in such a place.

He passed through the open street-door, into a narrow passage, and then into the "caffy-room," heralded by his important commissioner. This room was nearly full of "capt'ns," and "mas'r mates," and perhaps men of other trades, from England, almost all seated to detached tables, and eating beefsteaks, or mutton chops, or boiled or roast beef, and drinking London porter, or "brandy an' 'ot vater," just as if they had never left home. Graves took a disengaged chair at the wall, in the far end of the room, and looked earnestly from one to another of the company. Michael Mutford was not among them.

Should he enquire if he was in the house? or had put up in it? How make the enquiry? Would Mutford have given his name at the bar of such a place? Would he even have given a feigned one, with the addition of "Captain of The Miss Molly?" If not, what magic was to help Graves to that feigned name?

As he pondered a moment, inclined, at least, to take his chance of asking for "a Mr. Mutford" of Mrs. Smith, the landlady, a remarkable man entered the coffee-room, crying out, with a portentously hungry face, "Jane! Jane! the boiled beef!" Graves gazed at him as if he had seen

his like before. The in-kneed, ponderous, poking-out figure, the long, swinging arms, the large-lipped, heavy, smiling mouth, the small, twinkling, colourless eyes, the wax-white face, and the flax-white eyelashes, eyebrows, and hair, broke upon him as the renewal of, at least, an agreeable vision.

"I *have* communed with him before, as Coleridge might, in dreams," thought Graves, while Jane, a smart, pert, though not tidy English girl, came in with the boiled beef, and setting it before this gentle apparition, said, "Lau, sir, how you do go on a-holloring."

"Where's my capt'n, Jane?" asked the hungry one, cutting at the beef.

Jane believed he was out o'doors: he had certainly gone out about two hours ago, *she* knew.

"Now, Mutford, many praises to your graphic pen if I am right this time!" continued Graves: "do I, or do I not see before me your mas'r mate of the fortunate Miss Molly? and has he not, even now, made allusion to yourself?" Whether right or wrong, Graves determined to keep his eye on the beef-eater, and if Mutford should not appear in some time try to win his confidence.

But, till his dinner, at least, should be over, our friend gave up all thought of addressing him: meantime, he resolved to go out to the bar, which he had passed in his way to the coffee-room, and mention Mutford's name to the landlady.

Looking over the breast-high barrier between him and Mrs. Smith, he saw a woman of about fifty, of great bulk of carcass, wrapt in flannel, sitting on one chair, and resting a swollen and also flannel-bandaged leg on another. Her face was broad, vulgar, yet with a certain expression of goody-ness upon it, and red as the highest-coloured brandy, mixed with claret, could make it. One might fancy that she held her own French wines and *eau de vie*, and that they shone through her cheeks as through part of a transparent barrel. That she suffered under a subsiding of the gout, in the disguised foot, was hinted by her wincing, now and then, during a very energetic occupation in which Graves found her absorbed. Upon yet a third chair before

her lay a half-cut, large, fat, and (Graves swore it by his nose) badly-cured ham; and with a prodigious knife, and its sister fork, at this she still worked, abstracting slice after slice, while to Jane, who stood beside her, a plate in either hand, she said, —

"There, my dear, more fine ham for them: that's fifteen sous, Jane," putting a portion on one of Jane's plates: "yes, my dear, finer ham than they'll get all the time they are on the road from Boulogne to the south of France: ay, or all the time they stop there, building and plastering for the poor French: *poor* souls! T'other plate, my dear: that's twelve sous and a half, Jane: run up to the poor men, Jane, and run down again, quick, with the money, my dear."

"Miss's," said Jane, in a low voice, passing her nostrils over the plates, "I 'm blessed but I think they'll guess at this."

"Well, and if they do, my dear? as fine a ham as ever came out of Yorkshire; put 't in bit of paper, Jane, each lot by 'tself. Poor men, they 're in such a hurry! in from Dover by the morning boat, and off by the Diligence so soon, poor souls! they'll show folk how to build, and such like in France, *I* know. There, my dear, go — that makes the thirteenth plate, Jane; two owing for." She was going on in her work; two or three men, whom Graves recognised as his late fellow-voyagers, passed in to her, by a door near where he stood, and each holding sovereigns, or English bank notes in his hand, asked her where they could get them changed into French money?

"Changed — French money? eh, my dear? give it to me; I 'll get it done for you." She snatched at the hand of the applicant nearest to her, forced the sovereigns out of his grasp, and when she had counted them into her ample lap, and then, after a plunge into her pocket, drawn up a number of five-franc pieces, and counted them back to the inexperienced English traveller — "here, my dear," she resumed, "I 'm always as obliging as I can; 't is my way. Here, my dear, twenty-five francs, you know, to every English pound; and so, there, and there, and there, my dear;" and the thankful man pocketed his twenty-five

francs for every pound, while he might, at that time, have got within a few sous of twenty-six francs had he gone to the bank, or, rather, had Mrs. Smith permitted him to go.

"Well, my dear?" she blustered on, all the time puffing hard, and, at intervals, cringing down, with an outstretched hand hovering over her enflannelled foot, at a civil distance—"Well, my dear, and can I oblige you, too?" accosting the second possessor of English money, and wheedling him within grappling distance, till she secured his wrist, and his money also; "to be sure I will; there, my dear, let me have it;" and again she captured her prize; again gave her twenty-five francs for each pound; and so went on, successively, with the third individual.

"Well, my dear," she resumed, turning to Graves, at the bar, "and can I do any thing for you?"

No, Graves had no money to change, he thanked her. He mentioned Mutford's name. She was quite sure no such gentleman was in the house, or had been lately; nay, as well as she could remember, ever. He returned to the coffee-room.

The white man had not relaxed in his attacks upon the round of beef. Graves took a resolution which went against his tastes, though, to tell the truth, as the beef looked better than the ham, not much against his stomach. He craved permission to sit down at the same table with the white man. His request was accorded hospitably, and in a good-natured fuss; the well-known frequenter of Mrs. Smith's house doing the honours to the stranger, such as "holloring" to Jane for a plate, a knife and fork, bread, more "wegetables," fresh mustard, and a pint (he had first ordered a pot, but Graves moderated him,) of London porter. And then he put about two pounds and a half of beef, carrots, and greens, to begin with, on Graves's plate, drank his health, and welcome to France, and finally resumed his attentions to himself.

"Just landed, *I* know, sir?" he said, his fat voice, peculiarly modulated by breaking its way through a solid medium of half-masticated viands.

Graves looked round the room before he answered. All the other dinner-eaters had finished, and were gone about their lawful callings. He and his new acquaintance were the only persons in the apartment. Then he admitted that, indeed, he was a new arrival.

"And your first trip, sir?" Graves again assented.

"And quite alone among the Parleys, sir?" The gossiping impertinence which at another time he would have checked Graves now indulged, answering, with an attractive and impressive sigh, that he *was* quite alone—among strangers.

"I be blessed, sir, but that be bad—not knowing their ways, and having business to do with them—that is, if you *have?*"

"Little absolute business," Graves said; "and yet, the advice of any good-natured person acquainted with Boulogne, and its ways, would, doubtless, be of great assistance to him in the—the sad affair which had brought him to France," and again Graves drew a deep sigh.

"Well, now, I be blessed,"—and the white man went on to offer himself, with great good-will, as a Mentor, in any supposable case, seeing that he felt himself quite at home in Boulogne, from constant visits to it.

"Then, in fact," continued Graves, "I have been directed to this house as the place where I should certainly find a friend of mine, who left the coast of England last night for Boulogne, and who will be in great danger—he, and all the new friends with whom he is at present connected—if he returns to England without hearing what I have to say to him."

The listener laid down his knife and fork, and, while he drank a long draught of porter, looked with no expression of folly at the young barrister. Graves took little notice, but let him show his colours at his leisure.

"And *baynt* he in the house, sir?" at length demanded Farmer Bob.

"The landlady assures me he is not."

"Oh, sir, for all that he may be; so many people come and go, and so many names keep buzzing in Miss's Smith's poor ears, and she not having the best of heads in some

matters — so that if you think fit to whisper your friend's name to me, sir, p'raps I may 've heard it at the bar."

Graves did so. Farmer Bob looked assured of disagreeable news, though he evidently struggled to show as little consciousness as was possible.

"Mutford? Mutford, sir?" he resumed; "now I *be* sure Miss's Smith be wrong; there *was* a gentleman of that name in the house a few hours ago, *I* know; and, most likely, he will come back to sleep here, too; and s'pose, sir, I should see him afore you, can I obleege you by giving him any message?"

"Yes, if you please," answered our friend; "tell him that one Lieutenant Graves has got a hint from the Custom-house, at a place he knows, to watch the Miss Molly to-night, and for some nights to come, at a place which he knows also."

The habitual as well as natural self-command of Farmer Bob was all but staggered by this abrupt speech. Graves enjoyed the scarce-plausible air of innocence with which he answered, — "Well, and I be blessed but I will give your message; — one Lieutenant Grapes, or Graves, you say, sir? and the Miss Molly, sir? I 'll be sure and remember."

"Thank you; and pray add, that the friend who brings him that hint has good news for him as well as bad — good news in the shape of a letter from his sister, and a tin box from Lord Lintern."

Again Farmer Bob promised not to forget; and Graves felt some comfort in the assurance that, although he might not be able to see Mutford immediately, or as soon as his "mas'r mate," the Miss Molly would not put out very far from Boulogne for a few days at least; and thus a meeting with his poor friend seemed more probable than, an hour ago, it had done; meantime, that he would be saved from exposure and danger by recrossing to England in the continued character of a smuggling captain.

Graves resolved, further, to sit where he was, waiting the chance of Mutford's return to the house, as had been promised by his mate. Something made him change his mind.

A sottish, ill-faced, slow-pacing fellow, dressed in the last days of a neat-fitting dandy suit of clothes, came into the room, and, after interchanging a look of recognition with Farmer Bob, sat heavily on one chair, stretched out his leg upon a second, hung his arm over the back of a third, and said, in a lazy, surly tone, letting his head fall back, and shutting his eyes,—"Capt'n parted company, and wouldn't take no hail to come back; gone up into the country, no one don't know where; rum chap, that, for a capt'n; never liked him; thought him a fool; and so he be."

Graves listened attentively.

"Gone up the country, alone, Will Brown?" demanded the anxious "mas'r mate."

"Yes, or like it; no great difference. Don't you remember the fool of a bit of a dandy as came here this morning, to chatter with you and me for a passage to England on the sly, telling a fool's story of how he killed a French 'un at Paris, and was afeard to go aboard the steamers?"

"Yes, Will, I remember."

"Very well; pointed him out, I did, to our new mas'r capt'n to-day; and away he flies from my side that min't; and I loses sight of him; and, half an hour after, I sees him chasing that 'ere young 'un, sometimes walking fast, sometimes running, the two together, only the young 'un a good way a-head; and so, as I said, they be gone up the country, two fools alike."

"Which road?" asked Farmer Bob, with some misgivings of the constancy of the captain of the Miss Molly, —"the road to Paris?"

"No; I axed, and a party told me, The road to St. Om'r."

Scarce had he said these words when Graves left the coffee-room, suddenly and hastily.

And he, also, asked his way to the St. Omer's road, and —Mas'r Brown would have said,—There was now a third fool added to the other two.

Certain painful misgivings possessed Graves's mind. He identified, to himself, the individual in pursuit of

whom Mutford had parted company with the reputable Mas'r Brown ; and though the hope of meeting Mutford upon a strange road, in a strange country, an hour after night-fall, seemed enough vague, still Graves *did* set out from Boulogne, praying that he might, by some good chance, be the means of hindering his friend from, perhaps — doing a murder.

Meantime Mr. Snow gained the temporary abode of his young friend, Lady Ellen Allen.

Their meeting in the presence of her good protectors was joyful to both. Lady Ellen, as a daughter might have done, wept some tears upon his shoulder ; she *was* his child in pure esteem and affection, and he was loved by her, as, alas, she could not at present love her own father.

They sat down to dinner. Mr. Snow told his good news. The act of justice done by Lord Lintern towards the Mutfords ; the strong hope, the almost certainty of his becoming reconciled to his elder son ; and lastly, as dinner was ended, he congratulated her upon an invitation from her father, to return to his care and protection, and handed her her father's letter, in testimony of his statement.

With sparkling though streaming eyes, Lady Ellen broke the seal of the letter. It produced upon her a different effect from what her friend had anticipated. After reading its last lines, a slight but painful shriek escaped her, it fell from her hands, and she would have fallen from her chair, but that Mr. Snow, who sat next to her, supported her.

When restored, she put her hands to her face and wept bitterly. She was getting faint, again, notwithstanding this relief. Mr. Snow recommended her, as the evening was mild and dry, though a winter evening, with an unclouded moon, to wrap herself up and pass out, with the help of his arm, into the garden.

She complied eagerly ; she seemed anxious to be alone

with him : and the moment they were alone, she asked if he knew all the contents of the letter she had received ?

" I thought I did, my dear ; from the circumstances under which I got it," he answered, " I could imagine that it contained nothing but your father's invitation to return home to him ; if it does not contain *that* ——"

" It does, sir," she resumed, as the good man paused, almost in indignation, " it does, and I am thankful and grateful that it does : but, oh, dear Mr. Snow, it contains more ! Just one line more ! and that one more is enough, I fear, to destroy my peace of mind for ever !" She wept again.

Her friend was silent, so far as regarded making any request to learn her secret, if secret she chose it to be. He only tried, in soothing and holy words, to make her feel that, whatever afflicted her, she ought not to doom herself, in this fair world, in her early youth, and with a heart to love the author of all that is fair and good, to a life of unjoyous regrets and recollections.

" Oh, sir," she said, " let me tell you what I have to tell you, and then you will judge for me and advise me. A wretched, wretched story it is, Mr. Snow, and some parts of it as surprising, almost as incredible, as the whole is wretched ; but that is nothing : we live in a strange world, I believe, although a fair one, where chances do come about, — sudden meetings of those who think themselves widely separated, and other things, — which would read unplausible in fiction.

" About the very time that my excellent friends brought me here, the château next to us, and only a field off, — you can see its chimneys over the trees of this garden, and outside the fence of the shrubbery we walk in are its pleasure-grounds, — about that very time, if not the very day, another English family took that château. They consisted only of a lady and a gentleman, with their servants. We soon heard some tittle-tattle about them ; you cannot curb the tongues of your attendants, sir, and, I believe, those of French girls and women least of all. Our neighbours were represented as remarkable people. The lady, we learned, was young, beautiful, fashionable,

commanding,—haughty, I supposed; the gentleman more than double her age, plain, affable, and unattractive. It was said, next, that she was "milady," and he only Monsieur; next that he called her by one name, and she him by another; next, that — that — they could not be married, for they always had separate chambers, widely apart; and yet that they had been surprised in endearments together, at least the gentleman had seemed so peculiarly attentive to the lady, that it was difficult to suppose them father and daughter, or brother and sister, or, in fact, related to one another in the ordinary bonds of family relationship, through any of its modifications: and the last and most remarkable thing we heard of them was, that, for the last few days before to-day, the lady repulsed all the gentleman's attentions; avoided him through the house, and in the gardens and pleasure-grounds; and, whenever they met, spoke to him in high tones, which he resented.

"Now, dear sir, attend and pity me. This day, I was walking in this very little shrubbery; of a sudden, the voices of a man and woman, at some distance, in the grounds of yonder château, came on my ears; I stopped, electrified, for the man pronounced the Christian name of my second elder sister, with her title; and some of the lady's tones, though I could not distinguish her words, thrilled through me. I was standing at the other end of this path, — down there, — a spot which I now dread to approach. If you could conveniently observe it, you would find that, owing to both châteaux having been a long time unlet, while both belong to the same proprietor, the fence, originally dividing the premises from each other, has been suffered to go to decay in that place, so that there is egress from our garden to our neighbour's pleasure-grounds. Well, sir, as I stood, unable to move on, the voices grew louder, as if coming nearer to me; then they suddenly ceased, after the lady had spoken in a very peremptory cadence; then I heard footsteps; and before I could turn aside, hastily stepping through the breach in the fence, her fine figure erect, her brows knit, her eyes flashing, and

her face red as vermilion, my sister Anna stood within a few paces of me.

" Words of astonishment escaped us both, and, after an instant's pause, ' Ellen!' she said, ' *you* here? and with whom have you come here?'

" I answered her in the simple truth, and demanded, in my turn, for my fears were great, from all I had heard and observed, ' and you, Anna, you my dear sister, though you will not let me call you so, with whom have *you* come to France?'

" ' Fear nothing on my account,' she answered, ' and so much I will say, though I do not recognise the right of a younger sister, at least one so childishly young as you are, to question in that tone, and with that silly look, the actions or the situation of an elder sister.'

" ' Anna, I implore you!' I said, ' do, do answer me; you will kill me if you do not!'

" ' Have you lately heard from England, Ellen? — to be sure you have — or did you hear nothing before you left, for France?'

" ' Nothing of you; not a word, Anna! — but, oh, do, I beseech you again ——'

" ' Foolish girl! what troubles you?' she interrupted: ' since you must have your pathetic scenic appeal disposed of, I do answer you, — I am with my husband.'

" ' Married, Anna! and according to Lord Lintern's choice?'

" ' No,' she replied, smiling, ' I have not, in this one step, been so dutiful as you have been in all that you ever did before his lordship's eyes.'

" ' Do not sneer at me, Anna: may I come and see you?'

" ' Ellen!' was her answer — ' by our father's command, and, indeed, our own different characters and pursuits, we have hitherto stood aloof, since you were a child almost: why should we fall in love with one another, now, of a sudden? Besides, my husband will see none of my family: he thinks you have all ill-treated him.'

" ' All, Anna? I, among the number? I, who, to this moment, do not know his name? But no matter—let me

see you, Anna, or will you come to see me? 'tis a short distance from one house to the other.'

" ' Why are you so very anxious that we should patch up an old indifference, Ellen? What is your motive, your object?'

" ' Will you not let me love you, Anna? and in my wish to love you, have I not motive enough for what I ask?'

" ' Tut, tut, child;—child as you are,—'tis not by such a rule the world's youngest daughters act.'

" ' Perhaps I *have* another motive.'

" ' Ay; so I thought. Pray tell it, at once.'

" ' I fear, Anna—I fear you are not happy.'

" ' Ellen,' she answered, her air and features resuming something of the expression they had worn when she broke through the dilapidated fence,—' I do not permit this:—I have made a choice, and, for the present, at least, or, as long as I like, *will* be content with it; nor shall you, nor any other human being, pretend to dub me unhappy, and come oppressing me with condolence: fare you well; as we have lived, Ellen, let us live; indeed, you know, we cannot live friends, if we become more intimate; you were always *too good* for *me*—don't you remember?'

" And while speaking those unkind words, Mr. Snow, she turned away again, smiling, and passed into her own grounds; no clasping of hands, no sister's kiss having marked our unexpected meeting, or our wretched parting."

" Afflicting, indeed, my dear," said Mr. Snow, " most afflicting to you for many reasons: that your sister should have married without her father's approval——"

" Oh, good sir, good sir!" interrupted Lady Ellen, her tears flowing afresh.

" That her own independent choice should not bring her happiness; and, worst of all, to you, that she still rejects your offer of affection, and will not allow you to contribute to her peace of mind."

" Mr. Snow, how can the circumstances have escaped you? they, such as they, fly quick enough, abroad.—But, Mr. Snow, you have not named the strongest reason why I should be afflicted—humbled and oppressed to the earth

—but my father's letter——hush!—does not some one walk softly outside this fence?"

Mr. Snow said he had heard no footsteps: both looked and listened, but it seemed that Lady Ellen had mistaken. She continued,

"My father's letter, sir! It supplies the reason you have missed! It informs me—in one line, as I have said—it informs me——oh, dear sir, the suspicions of the servants are correct!—oh, Mr. Snow, they only did not suspect enough!"

"My dear child! Lady Anna not married?—your father must have mistaken—be assured that such is the case."

"Such cannot be the case, sir! My sister has left England with the husband of another woman."

Mr. Snow could make no reply, no observation. Exclamations alone escaped him, and all his care was directed to calm the agony of grief to which his young friend now abandoned herself.

"Your advice, dear sir," she said, as soon as she could make herself intelligible—"your opinion, your counsel, can any thing be done? what am I to do?"

"If any human being can do any thing, it is you," he answered.

"Then, sir, direct me; think and speak for me."

"No, dear Lady Ellen, no. I will not do you an injustice. I will not presume to deprive you of the happiness of thinking, speaking, nay, and acting, too, for yourself. Compose yourself for a moment; form your own resolution; that is, in the presence of reason, listen to your heart, and follow its least whispers."

"Thanks, sir, thanks:" she took his hand—"*I* will not wrong *you*, by supposing you can flatter me; and so—" She dried her tears, was silent, then resumed.

"'Tis very plain before me, I think; I am sure it is. She repents already her hasty step. Perhaps, taking all things, gossipings, and my own observations into account, that step has not involved her so—so—"

"I agree—has not involved her, in reality, so deeply,

so lamentably, as we might fear: — I agree," interrupted Mr. Snow.

" But, whether it has or not, ought to be nothing to me, Mr. Snow — nothing, I mean, in the course my love of my sister commands me to take, — yes, indeed, dear sir, my love of poor Anna, — for I have never, never ceased to feel a sister's affection towards her: and so, this is what I will do. I will go early to-morrow morning, if not to-night, into her house; I will ask to see her; I will gain her presence, if they refuse to let me see her; I will ask her to come home with *me;* — I will put my arms round her neck — I will kiss her lips — I will kneel down, weeping, at her feet —" the feelings of the young speaker again broke up the studied firmness of her voice — " I will beseech her, in the name of our poor mother, whose face she remembers, though I have never seen it — in the name of our poor father, too, whose old age she and I may yet help to cheer, and — ay — and make honourable; I will promise to love her better than any living creature ever loved her, if she *does* promise to come home with me; I will promise to be attentive and respectful to her, as a younger sister ought, to an elder sister — I will speak to her, and kneel to her, till she gets up and gives me her hand, and says, 'Come!'—for, surely, surely, I shall prevail, dear sir! she cannot have — she *has not* the heart to spurn me!"

" She will not, my dear child, she will not," said Mr. Snow, touching reverently, with his reverend lips, the fair young hand he held, while Lady Ellen sobbed on his shoulder. — Both started, and stood mute and still, looking at one another, as other sobs reached them, from the place where Lady Ellen had before thought she heard a listener. Directly, steps, no longer disguised, passed at the other side of the fence: their eyes turned to the breach in it, of which Lady Ellen had spoken; her sister appeared, and advanced to them.

" No, Ellen, she will not," said Lady Anna, before they met — " your sister will not spurn you: she *does* offer you her hand; she *does* say to you 'Come.'"

After greetings, such as they had never before interchanged, Lady Anna continued,

"I have been listening to you, Ellen, for some time; and though I became an eaves-dropper after you had begun to speak, enough reached my ears to produce this effect. Let me explain a few things to you. Till the present hour, I never believed, never was asked or led to believe, that one human being could bear disinterested regard for another. I occasionally read of such things in pretty tales, or yawned over them in a box at the theatre or the opera, but they partook, in my mind, of the character of the professed fiction of the book, or of the artificial show of the stage. In the realities of life — of the life I led, since our mother's death — I never saw an instance of — *your heart*, Ellen; all those around me, either passed the question silently or scoffingly, or said boldly, there was no such thing. I did as they did, silently, scoffingly, or boldly. They treated me according to their theory: and according to it, I treated them. According to it, I treated you, also. You began to listen to your heart, as soon as you began to grow out of childhood — *now* I know such was the case; but *then*, I did not understand you, Ellen; and, taken together with your extreme youth, I set you down as a little prim visionary, giving herself airs upon an egotistical notion of her own imaginary goodness. My father's measures, when you leagued with Augustus, kept us asunder; I had few or no opportunities to correct my error; I continued in it.

"Now it is seen, and now it is corrected. I have heard you, I say, speaking of me. Can I hesitate to believe that there is such a thing as heart — as pure, simple, noble God-like affection on earth, *after* having heard you, Ellen? — I tell you, my sister, that I listened to you, until the new, the almost fainting sensation of my own heart, touched, opened, and gushing, brought me to my knees — my haughty knees, and made me weep with you. I questioned your motives, to-day — can *I*, at present? You knew not I was within hearing; you had been treated ill by me — repulsed; — calling me to your side, and to your love, gains you no worldly advantage; on the contrary,

you believe and fear it may gain you the world's censure ——"

"Dear Anna, not a word of that!" interrupted Lady Ellen. Mr. Snow was turning off towards the house.

"Stay, sir," resumed Lady Anna, —"I have heard you, also, this evening; I have heard *of* you, sir, before this evening; I know you to be the friend of my sister; her adviser—her tutor——"

"Nay, nay, dear Lady Anna," said Mr. Snow; "her friend I am proud and delighted to be called: but she has had a fitter and a mightier tutor."

"Well, sir, allow me to say only, that during any conversation between her and me, you cannot be an intruder; that, on the contrary, you have a right, if not a duty to remain here till I speak a few words more, and then lead Ellen and me into *her* house together."

Mr. Snow, smiling his most charming of all smiles, bowed, and stood still.

"Let me, then, be brief, dearest Ellen. What you have charitably and kindly conjectured of the degree of my guilt, is true. I can prove it, to demonstration, in the eyes of the world. I love not—I loved not—strange, even odious as the admission sounds—I love and loved not the man in whose company, although not alone, I have left England. You can imagine the kind of existence I have been leading, when I tell you, that revenge upon his vain and imperious wife was the sole momentary impulse to my as vain and worse than imperious step. The lady hated me; and owing to her interference, I lost the attentions of a man who—if I did not *love him*, either—could have given me high rank and sway in the world. Her whispers detached him from me for ever. I saw him married to another. Grief, rage, humiliation, and, as I have said, revenge possessed me. My *friend's* husband, in whose house I was, had often been gallant to me. He continued his politeness. I swore I would grieve her heart! I encouraged him. He lost his senses—proposed to me a journey from England—I assented; leaving a letter for her which I knew she would remember. Thus

guilty I have been. No farther. As I have told you, I can demonstrate the fact. And now ——"

Men's voices, and other quickly-succeeding incidents interrupted the speaker, and threw her and her sister and Mr. Snow into great agitation. It is necessary to explain at some length.

The captivating pigeon-winger is authority, that a man in a cloak and a hairy cap seemed to have scared away from the "sport for ladies," Lord Acorn's "new arrival from Paris."

She was right. Lord Acorn's young protégé did not at all like the regards and the features of the observant stranger on the sands. Along with his objection to be so taken notice of at present by any one, a vague notion of having before seen that half-muffled face, under disagreeable circumstances, passed across his mind. At a favourable opportunity, he left his sporting friends, and hastened into the town.

Looking behind him, in the first street he gained, he congratulated himself. Cloak-and-hairy-cap was not in view. He continued his rapid walk, and stood at the door of Lord Acorn's house, preparing to ring, and resolved to await, under its roof, the return of his friend from the sands.

He did ring; and, at that instant, the stranger caught his eye, crossing rapidly from the other side of the street. Not waiting to have the door opened, he turned shortly away, and doubling up and down other streets not known to him, increased his former speed almost to a run.

He emerged into the main street of the new town and ascended it—for it is an ascent, and a steep one too. More than once he again looked behind. He could not distinguish his follower; but it grew a little duskish, and he was not quite satisfied. He passed under the gate leading into the high town. A long, heavily laden waggon had just entered it before him, moving slowly; and, with many others, he was obliged to stand close against the wall of

the arched passage, to allow it to clear the gate. Here it was almost perfect darkness. The hinder wheels of the waggon were turning lazily by him. Through their spokes, he looked towards the opposite wall of the archway, and there, with another group who were also compelled to stand still, he thought he could make out, vaguely, the figure of the person he did not wish so near him.

He did not look again. The moment the way was open, he sprang on, up the first narrow and sombre street of the high town. He came to one of the flights of steps leading up to the ramparts, ascended them, and, unmindful of the glorious, half moon-lit panorama of sea and land, harbour, town, river, hill and valley around him, only looked close for some place of concealment. None appeared; and at the noise of another person ascending the steps he had just come up, he ran along the ramparts.

He arrived at the top of a second flight of steps. Without a plan, and only urged on by the instinct of avoiding supposed danger, he was about to descend them. Again he heard some one mounting up against him, and thinking but of one individual in that solitary place, his mind changed, and he hurried back the way he had come.

He regained, in fact, the first steps which had led him to the top of the ramparts. He stopped, and bent his head to listen; all was silent. He glanced back. No one appeared following him. He descended, stealthily pausing on every step; was in the street; and encountered the stranger so closely, that they almost touched. He just observed that a sign was made to him, but not anxious to answer it, raced with all his speed through the high town, across its old picturesque place, and onward, till he shot through its gate, its suburb, and came to where two broad roads branched off at an acute angle. One, he knew, led towards Calais; the other inland, to St. Omer's; he preferred and took the latter.

Unused to much bodily exertion on foot, he felt some fatigue in continuing his way against the long, though not abrupt hill over which the road at first wound, or rather went, as straightforward as it could. Though a high road, too, he found it kept in worse repair than, perhaps, the

worst by-road in England; and now treading ankle-deep in mud, and now stumbling into a rut, was not the best manner of making progress; though, at every fault, he gratified himself by cursing the French and France, and saying what he had heard others say, "that they were a century behind *us* in every thing." To add to his satisfaction, night began to set in in earnest, only relieved by a full, unobscured moon, about which he had never been in the habit of caring a farthing.

It had been market-day at Boulogne, and carts, waggons, and donkey-mounted women and girls passed him in great numbers, returning to their several villages, within from three to twelve miles of the town. Of the women, many were old, withered, and, in their knitted worsted jackets and close caps without borders, uninviting. Of the girls, in their caps with wide edgings to them, smart gowns, and little cloaks of stamped cotton, a sufficiency were pretty. All, young and old, gabbled to one another, their hearts light after disposing to advantage of their eggs, butter, poultry, and other country produce, at the market; and their good-humour and flippancy displeased our fugitive, chiefly because he did not know French well enough to understand all they said. When they laughed, he thought it impertinent; and once, when (heaven knows if in reference to him) they spoke of "*Les Anglais*," and laughed more merrily than ever, he d——d them, and assured himself that the French people, of every class, were the most presuming and self-satisfied people in the world.

He gained the top of the hill he had been ascending. He glanced adown it. No figure like that which he was thinking of most, challenged his eye. At least, he hoped and believed not; but, on account of the light and shade of the moon, could not again feel certain.

Proportioned to the acclivity he had mastered, there was a declivity of considerable sweep before him. He ran down this—continued along very little of a level road, and encountered a second long hill. His inclination to ascend it began to waver; and, as a waggon passed him, hooped over and covered with some coarse awning, he took a happy thought. He asked the man who followed the

waggon, with a whip in his hand, a pipe in his mouth, a white night-cap with a fine tassel on his head, and a great black beard of some days' growth, together with a good deal of manly, and, to tell the truth, self-satisfied expression on his face, to allow him to ride. The man consented, and he got under the awning, and was helped, at his own request, — stepping with some difficulty, from ledge to ledge of the bottom of the waggon, to its far end, by men, women, girls and boys, who occupied it before him, and who, once more to his abhorrence, were merry and loquacious among themselves. And there, almost quite in the dark, for the rude covering was open at but one end, he tried to adjust himself as well as he could, sitting on a ledge, and allowing, perforce, his legs to dangle through the space between it and another. However, he wished himself, in a qualified manner, joy of his situation. Now he was completely hid from the observation of any person on the road, and would be till his temporary carriage should arrive at its destination, where he proposed to abide for the night, if not longer. And before he had crept into his convenient obscurity, he assured himself he had not been remarked by his pursuer.

He began to call back his presence of mind, and his sagacity of a certain description. It occurred to him, for the first time, as very strange, that an officer of justice, of any description, should follow him, singly, out of Boulogne, when, upon two occasions, at least, he could have stretched out his hand, and arrested him in Boulogne. Besides, a single man against a single man ran more risk of failing in his mission, on the high way, in the country, than he could have done in the streets of a town, where, necessarily, he must have been backed by the local administrators of law and of justice.

'Twas very odd. Was his shadow an officer of justice at all? True, there were some good reasons why he should have supposed so, in the first instance; but, upon mature consideration of circumstances, since experienced, what or who was he?

The cowardice lurking in the bottom of his heart sickened at supposing him to be the honourable and ruined

individual himself whose legal agent alone he had at first trembled at. But, with a happy sigh, he soon rid himself of that great fear. It was almost broad daylight when he of the cloak and cap originally manifested himself on the sands, and though his features were not then distinctly displayed, the waggon-traveller must have recognised his former friend, if the intruder had been he. Besides, one was a remarkably tall man, the other hardly of the middle stature. So far he grew comfortable.

Still there remained a curious question. At the first glance at the stranger, he thought he had seen him before; and now he could not divest himself of the impression. Where? was he the very *gend'arme* from whom he had escaped, by a good bribe at Paris? — that very man in disguise now urged to pursue him by another bribe? But, again, came the rational case before considered. If it was he, or any friend of French law, why did he suffer him to escape from the streets of Boulogne, to hunt him — Heaven knows whither, but just according to the waggon and its owner — into the lonesome country?

He grew nervous and wavering, once more. A private vengeance, of some kind or other, seemed to threaten him. He called back the passages of his life from which might spring such an event; and though he could not boast many years, he found himself able to pause and reason upon more than one or two plausible cases. He recollected that a few months ago, in the north of England, a brother had sworn to revenge upon him the ruin of a sister. He had once struck down, and trampled upon a French valet, of less bodily strength than he; pledged his honour, before a magistrate, to the falsehood of the man's accusation, and defeated him; but, at parting, the French valet had whispered one hissing word in his ear, which, at the time, scared him. These and other things passed through his mind; did he feel penitent as well as frightened, during the precious self-examination? His last supposition was the worst of all — Augustus! or an agent of Augustus! — Augustus, his furious, if not mad, brother!

It was strange he never thought of Mutford, even slightly, or for a moment.

His reveries were interrupted by the waggon stopping. He became a little observant. The majority of his fellow-travellers got down on the road, wishing their friend, the waggoner, "good night," and thanking him for their ride in his vehicle; they were at home, or nearly so. No one remained in the waggon but a sprightly girl and a little boy, the daughter and the son, as appeared afterwards, of its proprietor. They assisted their father to get a large hamper out upon the road, and deliver it to the servants of an English family, the avenue to whose château was near at hand. All this our young fugitive learned by listening, in the far end of the waggon, for he could see no person on the road, or, at least, only very indistinctly. The servants went away with their load, and the waggoner came to ask monsieur if he did not mean to get down?

"No," he was answered, "I will sit here, if you please, till you arrive at your own house."

"My own house!" repeated the man, "to do that, I have to turn off the main-road, here, upon a by-road, for a league or more."

"Very well, go on."

"I have come out of my way to deliver that hamper," he continued.

"No matter, I am going with you."

"And whither *was* monsieur going?"

"With you, I tell you, till you stop."

"*C'est drôle, ça,*" observed the waggoner.

"There —" stretching forward to give him a five-franc piece —"what is it now?"

"*C'est très bien, à présent, monsieur,*" and having assisted his son and daughter to re-enter beneath the covered hoops of the waggon, he cracked his whip, and yelled to his beasts in the most diabolical manner and tone of his district.

Upon a by-road the waggon certainly turned. This fact became confirmed to the young gentleman inside, not only by the scraping of boughs and bushes against its awning, but by the tenfold jolting and shaking he underwent. Fool as he was, he had, in his heart, called the

main-road the worst that could be travelled over; it was velvet to the road he now explored, in darkness, in torture, and at the rate of about two miles an hour. Hill and hollow, holes, little pits, ruts, great stones, were not its sole attributes. The horses trod to their knees, and the huge wheels rolled to their axles, in the accumulated and ever-disturbed though never-removed mire of, doubtless, centuries; for *la belle* France is an old country.

Certain habits of the youthful dandy's mind disposed him, notwithstanding the not peaceful state of his nerves, to try and break up the anguish his body was enduring, by a chat with his female fellow-traveller. She sat at the far end of the long waggon, and, he had remarked, seemed from the outset, to take her journey as pure enjoyment; allowing her legs and feet to swing at their leisure over the last ledge of her father's great vehicle, and chattering or laughing with her little brother, or singing aloud to herself. It did not seem prudent to approach her, for two reasons: first, because his person would be exposed, in changing his place; secondly, because, in the endeavour to pass down to her, he might very probably slip between the ledges of the waggon and break his legs or his thighs. He was therefore about to ask her to come a little nearer to him, when he observed that she seemed pre-engaged. A man's voice, and a young man's too, wished her and her father good night, and then went on to say pleasant things to her, to which, with the readiness of French peasant girls, she answered as became her. Our listener grew very attentive, as he caught some tones of that voice. Had he ever heard them before? Some of his recent fears returned in their strength. Was the speaker Frenchman or Englishman? The fluency and ease of his language suggested the former notion; and, again, some of his accents the latter.

Still the encaged young gentleman listened. The conversation of the new comer was gay, but, it struck his unseen and unseeing observer, not vulgar. A gentleman, in fact, might so address himself to a merry country girl, in France, and so keep up a dialogue with her. And if he was a gentleman, what brought him there? Following

that waggon, at such a time of night, a-foot, on such an abominable road? The soliloquist looked cautiously to the opening of the waggon. Nothing appeared in view, from the road, but the night-capped head of its master.

Words interchanged between the brother and sister at length informed him that their home was at hand. Before this, he had heard the stranger wish the girl and her father good night. That greatly relieved him. He now felt as great consolation that his journey was ended, and new and almost perfect hopes of having eluded the inquisitive person at Boulogne, and of being at length quite removed from observation, in a retired village or hamlet off a main road. The girl and her brother got down. The honest waggoner again asked him if he also would not alight? He stept cautiously along the bottom of the vehicle, and, leaning on the arm which was civilly presented to him at its opening, jumped upon the road. In the act of doing so the arm intertwined itself with his, and grasped him tight. He stood upright, looked at his supporter, and saw the person he had come so far to avoid.

"You have led me a good way, to settle your own business, sir," said the man; "however, I allow you your own precautions, situated as you are."

"What business? what do you mean?" demanded the complimented party.

"Surely you remember having made enquiries to-day, about crossing over to England in a private boat?"

"No — you mistake me for some other person."

"Oh, come, sir, come: you've no need to be so cautious with me; 'tis you that mistake at present; you did, indeed, sir, make those enquiries; you offered, too, a round sum for your passage, if things should be prudently managed, and you landed safe; and the people with whom you spoke told you they could not strike a bargain with you till they should see the tight little boat's captain first; and I am he, sir, at your service."

"Supposing all this to be true, supposing you and me to be really the persons you speak of — what is your reason for following me out of Boulogne this evening? why could you not come to me in the town?"

"And, on my faith and conscience, sir, I am quite astonished at your questions. In the first place, I *did* try to make you out in Boulogne, when my people mentioned that you had called; and I *did* succeed in having you pointed out to me, on the sands; and I *did* come up to you there, and would have saluted you, but that you plainly made me a sign, as I thought to follow you; and, certainly, you cannot deny that I *have* obeyed you, as I believed you wished it to be; though, indeed, I wondered, more than once, on the way from Boulogne to this place, that you seemed so much afraid of any one seeing us join each other, and settle our little business together: however, as I've said, I gave you your own way, partly out of respect to your troubles, partly out of respect to the very handsome offer you make for a passage in my little boat."

"This is very strange," said the young gentleman, looking about him, in the vague thought of calling upon the aid of the waggoner, or of some other villagers, in case of need; for, whether it was the smuggling captain's manner, or that he could not quite suppress the indirect evidences of a hidden purpose, the person whose arm he still held tight, thought there was a dangerous sneer in his tones, although his words seemed plain enough. His features were not sufficiently exposed to declare any thing.

The doubter looked around. But he and his companion stood quite alone. The waggoner, his son and daughter, and even the waggon and its strong horses, had disappeared, and no other persons were visible.

They were upon the beginning of a descent of the by-road, into a hamlet; a few mud-built and thatched cottages appeared immediately at either hand; over those, ploughed grounds sloped upward, and, to one side, were topped in the distance by a ridge of craggy-crested hills, of which the features were sufficiently brought out by the brilliant moon, as also those of a rude fort and a low line of fortifications, crowning part of their summit. Behind the strangers swelled the last high ground, over which the waggon had come, shutting out every other object in that direction. So far, the night-scene was bleak and wild enough. Straight before them, looking down the descent

on which they stood, it was relieved. They glanced along the main, if not only street of the little village; and the lights shining through the casements of its picturesque — in some instances — grotesque houses and cottages, at both sides of the road, were cheering; and the calm moonshine sleeping on two sides of the quandrangular spire of its little church, and upon the tombstones of the church's burying-ground, was, although solemn, pleasing.

"Let us speak more, down in the village," continued the younger stranger.

"Hush!" whispered his companion, as the bell in the church spire began to toll slowly. He seemed strangely affected by its sudden clang, which the silent country around increased into a kind of booming echo, — "What can cause this?" he continued; "but see!"

He pointed with his disengaged hand, first to the doors of the churchyard and of the church, and then down the village street: the former were at the moment opened by a man and a boy, each bearing a lantern; and up the street came two women, carrying between them a little, little coffin, and followed by a third female, and a young man.

"Come, then, come down to the village," continued the smuggling captain; and he walked his companion hastily, from the top of the descent, some emotion within him apparently increasing.

They reached the open door of the churchyard, and there stood still. The two women who bore the little coffin were old; the third woman was young: none of them seemed much affected; the young man was the most so of the scanty funeral train; and yet not much so.

"The mother cannot be here," thought the smuggler, and he ventured to ask some questions of one of the old women. He was informed that the infant about to be buried had been almost still-born — gasping, however, a few minutes after its birth, to allow of its receiving the rites of baptism, and in consequence something like formal interment in consecrated ground; that its mother insisted, though a poor woman, on having it buried by the priest, accordingly, although, to avoid all display for such a little one, the ceremony had been deferred till night.

"And is this the father?" continued the smuggler, pointing to the young man: he was answered, Yes: "he does not seem much afflicted," he added.

"Ah, but, sir," answered the old nurse, "he has others that have been spared to him, and his poor woman is out of danger too; and as for this poor little thing, he knows it is a little angel in heaven now."

The smuggler smiled; but at the same time he drew in his under-lip, and turned a step aside.

The guardians of the little corpse seemed to have been waiting, according to usage, the coming of the priest to the door of the churchyard. He now appeared, emerging through the door of the church, followed by his *enfant de prêtre*. He was a tall and very old man; his teeth were gone; he stooped in the shoulders; his perfectly white hair flowed far down his back, vividly expressed by the contrast of the black stole upon which it fell, and the black conical cap which he wore barely on the top of his head: and yet he was a hale and vigorous old man; his dark eyes had the strength of middle age, his step was quick and firm; and his air expressed that mixture of courtly consequence, religious decorum, and, we must add, rustic briskness, which his early education, perhaps his early associations, his sincere conviction, and the bustling and sometimes brawling habits of the country parish-priest, into which he had settled, might be supposed to present, in a curious compound, together.

All this the smuggler noted as he came near, passing out of the shadow of the porch of the church into the moonlit path of the little burying-ground; and then his white hair, his fine features, and his waving white surplice, received upon them a fit splendour.

He stood before the group who required his offices. They saluted him: he stretched forth his right hand, and passed it over them. He motioned to have the little coffin again taken up; it had lain at the door; then, once more facing to the church, he began to read in Latin, his boy responding to him.

The smuggling captain drew his companion with him, after the little procession. It passed directly into the

church. So did they. The old priest walked up to the altar, and there continued his prayers. The old women put the coffin on a chair, and now added, to its former plain covering of white, a little pall, white also, but tastefully, according to village taste, embroidered with leaves of laurel, and other evergreens, and with every flower, wild and cultivated, afforded by the late season. They knelt, as so did the young female and the father. The smuggler, letting go the arm he had held till that moment, followed their example. His companion looked at him with astonishment. Heavy grief was in his face; his eyes could not keep in their tears. All this while the bell tolled in the steeple over their heads.

The prayers at the altar were done. The priest came to the coffin, and made over it the sign of the cross. Then he led the way into the churchyard, and with uncovered head began the sublime "From the depths I have cried unto Thee!"—and still the smuggler and his companion, whom he had again linked, followed the little funeral train.

All was over. The grave was closed; the last words were said; the priest and the people were gone; but the smuggling captain remained standing by that small grave. His unaccountable emotions seemed to overmaster him, in the observation of the only person who now watched him: they were not, indeed, violent or displayed; neither were they less obvious for that reason. The younger individual began to think he had fallen in with a madman. But he had not; he only looked upon a man whose early sorrows were now called up by incidents and sights which in such a breast as his made association and strong recollections inevitable; upon a man whose heart was warped, and whose spirit had been partly broken, or else taken possession of by a devil, in consequence of those sorrows. Oh, little could the cold observer understand, even had he perceived, the nature of the great and true pangs which devoured the supposed lunatic! It may be added, it was well for him, perhaps, that, ere he and his pursuer had spoken more together that night, the churchyard had been entered by them.

They were walking hastily out of the little village, by the steep by-road which they had descended to it.

"You do not wait to end our conversation here?" asked the younger man.

The other stopped, and seemed to consult his own mind an instant, as if disengaging it from its late emotions, and then answered rapidly, and in a low voice, — "No, no, no, not in the hamlet, with so many eyes and ears about; come on."

"I should prefer entering some little public-house, in the street, sitting down in a private room, and there——"

"It cannot be," interrupted the smuggler, sharply: "I do not know, cannot say, but I may be recognised by some friend of the French *douanes*, so near the coast: private as the place seems, those persons may be prowling through it; and I have interdicted English articles on my person: though, indeed, I have such articles as these, also," showing the hilts of two pistols under his cloak, — "just to try and hinder people from thwarting me, to-night, in my humour:" the last words had peculiar meaning in them.

"Then what do you propose to do?"

"To walk on, as I have told you, the way you came in your easy carriage, to a certain spot which I marked attentively as I followed you, an humble pedestrian; and which spot I have set down in my own mind as very favourable to the kind of conversation we are to have together."

"Is it a house?"

"No, no: walls have ears every where, you know; and, by the same rule, so have the hedges and fences we are now passing, at either hand of this atrocious road: for which reason, let us speak of any other thing but the business in hand, till we gain my chosen council-chamber."

"To be candid with you, Captain, I am scarce able to get on much farther, without a little refreshment: I have not dined to-day, and my run out of Boulogne, till the moment I met you, descending from what you call my easy carriage, has fagged me."

"Let us see, then:" the smuggler felt under his cloak: "I remember that one of my little boat's crew thrust some sea-store into my pocket last night, where it has remained

ever since, without my minding it: can you put up with this fare?" He presented a small flask of brandy, and some hard biscuits.

"They are welcome," said his hungry companion.

"Well, then, you may sit down on this great stone, and try them; I will lean my back against the fence here, opposite to you, and wait till you shall be ready to walk on."

Both disposed of themselves according to this intimation. The young gentleman, beginning one of his biscuits, glanced across the narrow road, at the smuggling captain's face. The moon being at his back, that person was in the deep shadow of the fence against which he leaned, and moreover his head leaned towards his breast, so that his features remained more a mystery than ever.

His guest of the moment continued his plain meal. A low laugh from the smuggler reached him.

"I amuse you, sir," said the young dandy.

"No, no, that's not it: I will tell you really why I laugh, in spite of myself. Are you a reader of German stories?"

"Indeed I am not," answered the youth.

"You might be as badly employed, then."

"I never, by any chance, read at all—not a single thing."

"Ah, I forget; 'tisn't sense, now, that business of reading: but you may have looked into some of the stories I mention, when you were at school, a long time ago?"

"Positively no. People don't go to school to be bored in that way."

"Well: it was at our resemblance, in our present situation, to a German story, that I laughed."

"Indeed! And what fable of the kind do we so much resemble?"

"Why, once upon a time, the devil—do you believe in a devil?"

The young gentleman only stared.

"Once upon a time, the devil took a particular liking to a certain man, and tried all kinds of bribes to have him. He offered him sacks of gold: 'twouldn't do; the man was rich enough, or whenever he wished for an extra supply, knew a way, at cards and dice, to coax it out of his neigh-

bours' pockets. He offered him a harem, renewable once a month. That wouldn't do either; the man's chief business in this life was making love, and he never yet had experienced a repulse, nor feared the consequences of disturbing the peace of an honest family. These, and many other things, the devil offered in vain; but do you know what he got the man to take from him at last? and how it happened? He met him, one night, in a lonesome place, after the man had been hunting all day, and had lost his companions and his way together, and was very hungry, and the devil prevailed on him to accept a luncheon at his hands."

"I don't understand; it seems a silly story enough," said the young gentleman.

"And so it is. But you are now ready to move on." The smuggler offered his arm: it was accepted; and they continued their way through the almost impassable road.

"It seems to me quite unnecessary to proceed farther, without settling our business," resumed the youth.

"Hush: on your life, not a word of it, till we can sit down comfortably, as I proposed to you. But we may speak on any thing else you please; so choose your topic."

"Then I will ask you a question."

"A hundred, if you like; only not one about the forbidden subject."

"One about yourself?"

"Ay, and about myself, too; but under the eternal proviso."

"Agreed. What could you see in the French humbug of that little brat's funeral, a while ago, to make you lose time over it?"

His companion snatched away his arm, stepped aside from him, and became suddenly moved. He stamped his foot slightly, grasped his cloak tight around him, with both hands, and while his face was turned away, muttered more than once, "Villain!" Again the person who observed him believed that he was mad, and in this conviction, and under the fear it engendered, let him work himself out of his fit, and stood quite silent.

The fit ceased sooner than he expected. The Captain

again took his arm in a few minutes, and walked him forward.

"Excuse my not answering you directly," he resumed; "a sudden pain sometimes sets me nearly frantic. But 'tis gone now, and I think will not return soon. That little funeral? To tell you the truth, it gave me a twitch of what some people in the world call conscience; though Heaven knows I have little to do with such a commodity: 't is a bad one to trade on. However, I couldn't help playing the fool that time. We all have our faults, and I am no saint; and to be candid with you, 't is only a short time ago since a poor girl, whom I was too fond of, and who was too fond of me, died, giving birth to a little wretch, and they were buried together."

"Your roving life must be a gay one, Captain."

"Why, yes, except for such little consequences as I have just hinted at."

"Don't you take your misfortune rather too much to heart?"

"Indeed I believe so, as the world goes."

"My creed is that, after all, there is no such thing as seduction; and therefore, were I in your case, I would not allow any consequences of such an affair as you allude to to oppress me beyond measure."

"How do you mean? no such thing as seduction?"

"No; your liking, or your whim, or your passion — certainly, your nature, which you can't help — only gives a woman opportunity, of which, according to *her* nature, she avails herself."

"That seems plausible. But suppose the results are really unfortunate to her?"

"She has brought them on as much as you have, and ought to share them and bear them accordingly."

"So far as shame goes and loss of friends, and the world's opinion, perhaps?"

"Yes, all that kind of thing."

"If, when her friends throw her off, or from any other cause, she wants — money?"

"Why, in that case, I can hardly see that she is to look to you; that is, exclusively to you: I don't mean you

should refuse all assistance; but still, I say, as one of the consequences we spoke of before, she ought, in reason and justice, to look to her own exertions also."

"You seem to have considered the subject: and *your* life also must be a gay one, sir: a young gentleman of fortune spending his time and his money at his pleasure cannot live dull among the soft-hearted sex."

"Not exactly, I suppose," the vanity of the youth, aroused upon a subject which touches more than any other men of his years, began to possess him to the extent of the loss of some portion of his stolid dignity; "for my own part, I have nothing to complain of, on that score, no more than your successful self, Captain."

"I do not fear it, sir; and, doubtless, before now you have stood in something like the situation I spoke of having stood in myself?"

"As yet, not exactly that: though indeed, for ought I know, at present, the *last* poor girl may, about this time, be in some trouble."

"In England, I suppose?"

"Yes: when I parted from her for this country, she seemed afraid of what a few months might bring about."

"And you 've not heard from her since?"

"No, — I cautioned her against writing, of all things."

"Is she well off, for what may happen?"

"Why scarcely: I fear that a hot-headed brother she has may have treated her roughly, by this time of day."

"Has she any sister?"

"No: nor yet a mother; and the father is old, and poor enough, and was sickly when last I saw him."

"You will go see her when we land you in England?"

"I don't know, perhaps I may: I will enquire after her, certainly, I think."

"According to your way of thinking on such subjects, she has not, as yet, made you suffer in your purse, to any great extent, I warrant?"

"Candidly, no; I presume it will be time enough *to pay*, when events call on me to do so."

"Suppose, to get your full opinion on my own case — suppose she was — to die, now?"

"I should be sorry, still according to my rule, to half the full extent one ought to be, if her death were one's own unshared fault."

"And if she lives, making you a father?"

"In the first place, unmake myself, as fast as possible, of the fathership."

"How?"

"Give the parish its legal stipend to ease me of the honourable character."

"Well; and in the second place?"

"Let me see: if she lives, and looks as pretty as ever, or very nearly so, perhaps go and console her; for, to do her justice, she is rather the superior of any of her foolish little predecessors, and one *might* be tempted to continue her reign for some time."

"Oh God! oh God!" cried the Captain, stopping suddenly, a second time, and spreading his hands over his face.

"Why, what's the matter?" demanded the young system-monger, — "your pain again?"

"Nothing! here is our place for concluding our business!" He caught the youth by the arm, and hurried him through a gap in the bushy fence of the narrow road.

They walked rapidly, often stumbling, over a ploughed field, which fell into a hollow. They gained its boundary, and proceeded, still descending over short grass mixed with moss, and strewed with small stones. The bottom they at last stood in was rushy and moist. They were fully shut up by high grounds, about fifty feet below the level of the road they had left, and perhaps half a mile from it. The descending moon did not penetrate to them, her light was only able to strike the top line of the sombre sweep of land to one side.

"Stand, now, and let us make an end of the matter between us," resumed the Captain, letting go the arm which, to this moment, he had held.

"Is not this strange conduct, Mr. Smuggling Captain?" asked the youth, fear itself making him incautious and desperate.

"You mistake me," answered the other, controlling him-

self, and standing opposite to his companion, with his arms folded.

"Mistake you! how?"

"I am no smuggling captain. No captain of any kind from this hour; I have done with the character, though it has served my turn."

"You have followed me from Paris, then?"

"Not a foot of the way."

"You have been employed in Boulogne to follow me?"

"I have followed you from Boulogne of my own accord."

"Who are you?"

"And is it quite true that you have never suspected?"

"I tell you, sir, I know you not."

"Are you superstitious —*as it is called?*" continued his pursuer, in a remarkable voice, and advancing close to him, till their eyes met, "*do* you believe in an existence of whom we spoke on the road? *or*, will you not indeed know me?"

The questioned party, though he never before *had* suspected himself of superstition, felt his flesh grow chill, and his sight fail him, for an instant. With the sudden and weak feeling was, however, mingled the conviction, now stronger than ever, of having seen his persecutor before that night; and this instantly recovered him to observation.

"Can you not tell me your name and business at once?" he resumed.

"Look at me again; for 'tis necessary that you identify me, to your own full satisfaction: I will assist your memory," he took off his cap and lowered his cloak; "and though, indeed, we have been near to each other but once or twice in England, you surely cannot quite forget the features of your poor cousin, Michael Mutford?"

Young Allen drew back from him in evident alarm, though it appeared of a kind different from any he had yet evinced.

"Yes, sir, I recollect you now," he said; "and what is the meaning of your conduct towards me?"

"Do not fear immediate danger. My business is not the patching up of an old quarrel, in a way that you once pleaded boyhood to excuse yourself from. I am armed, as you know; yet I will speak with you first. 'T is but lately I came to the resolution of doing so, however. I had once resolved to hand you a pistol the moment we should meet, and wherever we might meet, and step back four paces from you, with another in my own hand. But now my mind is changed. It changed, in a degree, last night, crossing over from England in the hope of hearing of you in France; not, indeed, hearing of you immediately, but when, according to contract, I should have made two voyages as a smuggling captain, for my employer, to discharge a sum of money he advanced me; it was then I hoped to find you out. You are entitled to all these details; for you have caused them.

"Well. Last night, for the first time, my mind changed slightly. It changed this night decidedly; and the 'French mummeries' in that little churchyard, and the human nature they moved within me — though once they would have had a contrary effect — were the cause of my final resolution in your favour. I said I would speak with you; and I do, and I will.

"George Allen, you have made me very low. You have shamed me — before that I suffered nothing. You can never take away the shame from before my own eyes; but you can half take it away in the eyes of the world. Do so; do that, even that, and my hand shall never be raised against you, nor my tongue heard branding you for a scoundrel-villain. In the person of my sister you have shamed me. Though you may not yet have heard it, learn from me, that, on your account, and on the testimony of your agent, Lucy Peat, Bessy Mutford has been brought to shame before the face of your own father:"—Allen started, and his alarm grew strong:—"and so you will do one thing in atonement: you will marry Bessy Mutford."

"Marry her, sir!"

"Yes; only marry her, and then abandon her, as you have already made up your mind to do; and she shall never cross your path again; never be a burden to you: and," added Mutford, "to bribe you to this good turn, I think

I may safely promise you one relief — the poor girl — child almost — is, I firmly believe, dying, though slowly dying, this moment. So you will soon be free to make a more brilliant match. Do you promise me?"

"'T is impossible, Mr. Michael Mutford." Allen spoke in terror, and his eye glanced round, as if to seek for a way to escape.

"Do not say impossible; do not; she is very wretched; her father is dead; he died the same day; why is it impossible? I do not demand of you, Allen, nor command you; — I entreat you; why is it impossible?" He advanced, and laid his hand on Allen's shoulder.

"Why impossible? — you did not give me time to answer you:" — he freed himself of Mutford's hand, and fell back: "'t is impossible, for a good reason, because — because"— he stepped farther back —"because she believes herself married already."

"To you, George Allen?" Mutford stepped quietly after him. "*Believes* herself married to you? what does that mean? *is* she not really?"

"Tush! what close questions. Good night, sir." He bounded against the side of the hollow, Mutford after him. His foot slipped. Mutford knelt over him.

"Up, *now*," he said, "and take your ground before me! This is all lie, lie, lie, to cheat me and evade me! and you thought you could?" He helped him to rise. "Take that at last" — he gave him a pistol — "step back *two* steps from me — I will step the same from you — and when each tells 'two,' fire."

"You *are* mad to force me to this!" said Allen: "I say you have no just quarrel with me on your sister's account: let me speak."

"Stop!" answered Mutford, "and tell — 'ONE!'"

"One!" repeated Allen, and fired close to Mutford's eyes, but awkwardly and ineffectually, from trepidation. The bullet only passed across Michael's forehead, touching the skin; but the near flash blinded him a moment, and he reeled and fell.

When able to stand up again, he was alone. Rage gave him all the promptness and speed he wanted. He sprang

up to the level ground, and saw a figure running over the wide-spread land, in the moonlight. The rest was a wild chase. Allen did not return to the by-road, but fled, almost parallel with it, across the country. Mutford sometimes saw him plainly in cultivated ground, sometimes lost sight of him in a wood. He was closing him, however, when he saw him jump from a bank. He followed to the spot, jumped too, and was on the high road to St. Omer, half way down a great hill, with, as far as he could see, a leafless wood, frowning in dark brown shadow, at either hand. A little way down to the right he heard a crackling among the brushwood. Gaining the place, he entered the wood by an alley cut or left through it, and opening on the unenclosed road. In a few moments he saw Allen again. They issued — after breaking their way through many parts where there was no path — from the dark and solitary forest almost together. The pursuit was then once more across an open country of hill and hollow. They passed the outskirts of a small village, arousing the voices of its watch-dogs. They got into an avenue leading to a château, and now they were not more than forty yards asunder: Mutford heard a man calling him by name; this did not make him slacken his speed. Allen burst through the hedge of an avenue, into a garden, across a lawn, into pleasure-grounds, through the breach in the fence between the château in which lived Lady Ellen, and that of her sister; and, just then come within shooting distance, Mutford fired, but harmlessly.

The person first recognised by the sisters was George Allen. He ran to them, and caught Lady Ellen by the arm, before he could suppose how nearly related to him they were: it seemed as if he was about to claim their protection, had his hurry and exhaustion allowed him to have done so: his surprise at finding himself in their presence was equal to theirs at his sudden and agitated appearance.

Mutford still pursued him, at only a few yards' distance. Again he heard a man calling him by name, behind, and now he knew the tones of his friend Graves. He stopped. Another person advanced to meet him;

he saw it was Mr. Snow, and at the same moment caught a glimpse of Lady Ellen Allen, speaking earnestly with her brother, while she looked, in great distress, towards him. His passion, his frenzy, thus checked and turned, the effects of over-exertion of body and mind seized him, and as he stood still, his discharged pistol in his hand, Mutford felt stupified, and Graves and Mr. Snow saw him waver from side to side, and stagger. The powder-flash across his eyes began to affect him also, with smarting pain, and dimness of sight. His friends kept him from falling.

He became passive; though in the intervals of stupor great astonishment filled his mind, as it glanced at his present situation. He was conscious that Graves and Mr. Snow conveyed, almost bore him, indeed, through a garden, into a house; that they paused at the bottom of a staircase; that there, Lady Ellen Allen, with two other ladies, one young, the other elderly, welcomed him to any attention the house could supply; that then he was alone, in a bedchamber, with Richard Graves, who, a second time, within a few days, superintended the comforts necessary for his exhausted state; ordering his footbath; a little hot wine, "with a toast in it;" a rushlight, and a night-draught, for his bedside; and, finally, assisting him to undress, helping him into bed, pulling on his night-cap, and — as cleverly as a professed nurse could have done it — "tucking him in."

Twice or thrice Mutford attempted to speak, during these operations, but was peremptorily and briefly commanded to be silent. "Hold your tongue, will you? You are an ass, Michael," was the most liberal answer he received, and to his own longest question of — "What 's this? are we not in France? and you in France, with us, Graves?"

There was a little opium in the wine he had drunk, (and drunk ravenously, too,) though he did not suspect it. Very soon it began to have an effect, and, joined to his former confusion and heaviness of mind, made him almost incapable of observation. He felt Graves, however, taking his hand; the touch aroused him; he grasped the hand close, and sat up.

"What 's the matter now?" he asked.

"You" — replied Graves — "you, to be sure, and who else, or what else? — you are always the matter; let go my hand, man, and lie still, and sleep; you have pulled all the bed-clothes about."

"I don't want to sleep — is that fellow shot dead?"

"Nonsense; you grow more foolish, now, Michael; what have you to do with shooting? what have you been doing with it, this evening, — setting off a squib into your own eyes, I think, and singeing your eyebrows in this manner? Do you remember the Calenders in the Arabian Nights? you 'll get up, to-morrow morning, as bald about the eyes as any of them; and pray God you may have left yourself even a single good eye, like any one of them: at present, you roll your orbs about vilely; one up to the ceiling; the other to the door: you 'll squint to your dying day: go asleep, I tell you: a pretty bargain we shall have of you, then; leading you about the world with a green pent-house over your nose, if we can't find you a dog; — go asleep."

"No not this night" — answered Mutford, drowsily.

"No? Listen then, attentively, to a case I have ready for your consideration."

Graves put away the candle which he had taken up, to light himself down stairs, before approaching Mutford to wish him a mute good night; then he took some papers out of his pocket, and in a solemn, dull, monotonous voice, began repeating some imaginary preamble of special pleading, in which, without ever arriving at an intelligible point, the same vapid things were repeated over and over. After about five minutes' effort to listen and comprehend, Mutford sank down in his bed, sound asleep.

"I thought it would do," soliloquised Graves, as he once more arranged the bed-clothes. Leaving the bed-room, he encountered, entering it, the professional sister, or old woman, deputed to watch by Mutford's bed for the night.

About the earliest hours of the morning, his exhaustion, and the slight dose of opium he had taken, began both to be slept away, and Mutford half opened his eyes, and

half distinguished the face of that old dame — a very ugly, as well as a very old one — bending over him. He had not power to continue looking at her, or thinking of her, awake, and he relapsed into a heavy slumber, to amuse his fancy with her, in visions. One of his dreaming conceits of her was, however, sufficiently abominable to make him start, and become imperfectly awake again. As he did so, he thought that a face and a figure of a different kind hastily withdrew from his side, and concealed itself behind the thin white curtains at the end of his bed. A vague but pleasing suspicion entered into him, tutored by which, he first made himself tolerably certain that he was not dreaming still, and then feigned profound repose. His artifice succeeded. The old woman came to look upon him ; disappeared at the foot of the bed, and then he heard two voices, whispering to one another, in the lowest key. Presently he was able to catch a sentence whispered by the more gentle voice of the two — " Very well — God be thanked — if he should at all seem worse, before day, be sure and let us know," and then there was a soft rustling, and a barely cognisable step, stealing softly, very, very softly ; and Mutford did catch, through his hypocritical lids, the side-face of the person who was in his thoughts, as she moved, like a moonlight fairy moving a minuet (were it possible that merry fairies ever dance so slow a measure), to and through the door.

Without a thought of her brother or her father, the consciousness of her goodness and kindness to him, — to him, who had deemed himself spurned and deserted in the world, by all but Richard Graves, — affected poor Mutford powerfully, though, on account of his yet drowsy state of sense, vaguely. He fell into his last sound sleep, weeping — but comforted, and almost soothed, if not happy.

In dreams, however, his mind changed its tone, once more. His old woman wakened him out of what she pronounced, in her experience, to be a bad dream. Mutford was ejaculating loudly, throwing about his hands, and working his features. His sleeping thoughts had been with his little sister Bessy, and had presented her in

appalling difficulties, distress, shame, and danger. Alas! they scarce pictured vividly enough what poor Bessy had suffered, was then suffering, and still had to suffer in reality.

Though he awoke otherwise much refreshed and strengthened, except in his eyes, which were worse after the night (though not in the state which Graves had prophesied), the dream, and the waking thoughts it called up, greatly affected him.

Graves entered his chamber, to give, anew, a happy turn and flow to his spirits and his hopes.

Having assured himself that his friend was enough recruited in body, and collected in mind, to bear temperately what it was necessary he should know as soon as possible, Graves entered into his pleasing histories. At the statement with regard to the tin box, and its present temporary place of safety, Mutford's philosophy forsook him, and he did some wild and some impassioned things. He bounded out of bed; he embraced Graves; he knelt down; he arose suddenly, uttering the names of his father and his sister, and then wrung his hands and sobbed.

"Where is George Allen?" he asked, changing his tone and manner.

"Returned to Boulogne, before daybreak, in the certainty of crossing over to England before daybreak also," answered Graves.

"Safe — unhurt?" he continued.

"Safe and unhurt, at the moment of his leaving this house; but, before he left, he and his sister, Lady Ellen, had a long conversation together, by which, as she kindly informs me, he ought to have received no injury, at your hand at least, Michael."

"Indeed! — so, first, I am to prepare myself to forgive — at least not to hate his father; and, now, I am to fall in love with himself? Dear Graves, let us run over to England instantly."

"After George Allen?"

"No — not immediately after him — but I must see my sister as soon as the space between us will permit. What

explanation is it that has so much satisfied you and Lady Ellen?"

"You may find it, at length, in this packet, I believe," answered Graves, handing that which he had received from Lord Lintern for him.

Mutford tore off the envelope:—"Why 'tis from Bessy herself!" he said.

"So I thought. Read it; I will leave you till you do so."

"Stay, dear Richard—I find I cannot read it—something has hurt my eyes—take it, and read it out, aloud, for me—come—no hesitation—you know I can have no secrets from you, now at least—take it."

Graves drew a chair to Mutford's bedside, and began to read. In a short time the friends were powerfully moved—and Mutford scarce more so than Richard Graves.

It was not merely for the purpose of compelling our readers to keep up their interest, that we forbore to declare the contents of Bessy's packet, when it first came into Lord Lintern's hands. It is on like grounds that we at present, or at least instantly, decline to do so. We rather wished, and wish, to give a copy of it, under the circumstances in which it was written, because such a course seems to promise more justice to the feelings of its writer. In fact, we propose that it be known, at length, while we proceed with an account of Bessy's adventures, after her separation from her brother. And now, no "gentle reader" need be impatient; for attention is turned at once to poor Bessy.

She had besought her brother to stay at her side, in the strange house and town to which he had conveyed her, until she should receive answers to certain letters that she proposed to write, in the view of obtaining, as she said, justice. He scoffed at her, and left her; left her quite, quite alone: whatever she had expected, Bessy had not expected that from him; a sense of utter, utter destitution and helplessness filled her mind; and after listening to his

wild footstep descending the stairs, and approaching the hall-door, and to the noise of the hall-door, opening quickly, and shutting violently, her heart at once failed her, and she fell — not wholly senseless, but more wretched than if she were so.

Though about to become a mother, Bessy was, in some things, childish herself (yet in no absurd or weak way), as Mutford has hinted. Want of experience, and living so much alone, hitherto, with her father and her brother, — ignorance of the world, and of the people of it, — left her nearly as timid and shortsighted as when she had been but ten years old; and hence, great as were her other pangs, this night, the feeling of being abandoned to strangers, and — worse — to the vague and unknown, and dreaded ways of a town in which she was totally unacquainted — not to say unfriended — that feeling of itself overpowered her, and she quailed, terrified before it.

But — her brother gone, she durst not conjecture whither — or upon what intent: her father a corpse, unburied, a day's journey away from her; her husband false and unfeeling — cold, estranged, careless — it must be so, she inferred, after what had happened — and his child soon to come into the world, in obscurity, poverty, and attributed shame! These were the features of the lot and the situation of Bessy, which went nigh to drive her distracted, as sitting on the floor, long after Mutford's departure, she wrung her hands, and cried to God to pity her, in low but heart-touching accents.

Spirit, self-assertion, and, girl as she was, indignation, suddenly changed her mood. She stood up, resolving to begin that very night the letters she had told Mutford she would send — for justice. One was to be written to Lord Allen; the other to his sister — his youngest sister. — "I am their dupe," she said, "after all my love for them, and my thinking them the very first of human creatures on the earth: — I am the dupe of their family and their worldly pride — yes, and of their family hatred: on reflection, they have been able to make up their minds to despise and neglect me, because I am poor; and spurn and wrong me, because I am a Mutford. More than four

months I have now waited to hear from them the tidings of reconciliation between Augustus, and his father, and us — Michael and me — and of right done to my poor brother; — tidings they assured me I should quickly hear: — and, instead, though I have kept my promise and *my* vow — almost my oath, towards *them*, they have broken every engagement towards *me*. Perhaps — oh mercies! mercies! — perhaps Augustus — but no, no — that, at least, I will not, cannot, do not believe!"

She had begun to utter to herself the fear that her youthful husband might improperly dispose of two important documents in his possession; namely, the special licence, under authority of which they had been married in London, and the certificate of their marriage. But, as has been seen, she did not allow herself to go on with the thought, even while she indulged in anger against Augustus and his sister, for their neglect of her for many months — their perfect silence, indeed, during that time.

And the reader will, by combining certain things which he has previously read, see that, even on this account, Bessy had no real grounds of displeasure towards her husband and her young sister-in-law: he will note, that, almost immediately after Bessy had been in London, Augustus was recaptured, and forced home, and coerced as a lunatic; and, before that time, Lady Ellen conveyed by her father to Wales, and deprived of the power even of writing, before she left home.

Bessy was about to ask for pen, ink, and paper. The old lady, her landlady, of whose kind-heartedness and respectability Mutford had assured himself, at once, on his own observation, came in, smiling blandly, and softly rubbing her hands, as she asked if Bessy would choose tea.

"Yes — no — yes — do whatever you like, I mean," answered Bessy, not able to feel herself in her place even towards so humble a person.

"Thank you, my dear; and I will do for you all in my power, the same as for my own child, you may rest assured," continued the landlady; "and I make no doubt we shall be good friends together." Bessy felt a slight degree of consolation.

"There is only one thing I am forced to tell you, my pretty young lady: I am a lone woman, with one or two daughters, and very poor, though, thank God, no one can say a word against our being respectable folk, that have once seen better days, too; and so, my dear, I must trouble you, if you please, for the money to send out for your tea, and other little things you may want."

"Pray, purchase for me whatever you think necessary out of the funds my brother has left in your hands, for my use," answered Bessy.

"Your brother, miss?"

"Do not call me 'Miss,'" resumed Bessy, "if you please; I look very young, to be sure; and, indeed, I am very young; but I am married;" and she could not quite check her tears, in the good woman's presence, though she had resolved to do so.

"Oh! married; very well, my pretty lady; very well, ma'am; young enough, indeed, to be married, as you say; though, to be sure, we have very young *mothers*, now-a-days; very well, ma'am;—and the gentleman was your brother, you say? Indeed, and we had been a-thinking some such thing; we couldn't think outright, that your husband would leave you so much of a sudden. And you expect the gentleman back soon?"

"Not very soon, I believe," said Bessy.

"Then your husband will come along to see you, ma'am?"

"Very likely not."

"But you expect letters, to-morrow or after?"

"Indeed I do not—why ask all these questions?"

"Beg your pardon, ma'am; no offence meant, I assure you; nothing but for your own sake: you spoke of your brother, as you say he is, having left money in my hands for you, I believe?"

"Yes—well?"

"Poor gentleman! he only forgot, in his hurry, I 'm sure, and that was why I hoped you might see him, or hear from him again, and soon, or else from some other friend."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, my pretty dear, that no money has been left in my hands for your use."

Bessy felt terrified at her very heart. Hitherto she had not numbered among her woes the woe of want, in a strange place. When her brother told her that he had given money for her to her landlady, she believed him, and, on the question of mere existence, till he should come or write again, was satisfied. Now it appeared either that, as the landlady suggested, he had forgotten, in his hurry, or had said what was not the case, to make her tranquil at parting, and until he could really procure money to remit to her. Bessy never dreamt of believing her brother still, and disbelieving the good old dame before her. The benevolent smile on the landlady's comely face, her grave and gentle demeanour, and her respectable appearance, made such an impression, that Bessy had not a doubt of her. Let us not chide too severely the want of worldly suspicion and calculation here shown by poor Bessy. The amiable old dame had equally deceived Michael Mutford, though he had often been complimented, even by Richard Graves, upon his skill in physiognomy; nay, it has been proved that she was not unsuccessful, once or twice, in the same way, with people old enough to be his grandfather; and we own that, when we saw her in gaol, awaiting her trial, for this identical piece of cleverness, she puzzled our very selves — and, after our ingenuous acknowledgment, who doubts her talents?

At her last-mentioned assertion, Bessy, little skilled in checking or tutoring her feelings, for her own worldly interests, betrayed the greatest consternation. She clasped her hands, and asked, below her breath — "Is that possible?"

With much sorrow, she was assured it was true. "Then God help me! what shall I do, mistress? I have not a shilling in my own pocket!"

"Bad news to hear, indeed," the landlady said, allowing some gravity to mingle with her anxiety and sympathy; "but," she continued, "it was to be hoped that 'her pretty lady' would soon have money, in a letter; and, till then, they must only try and do the best they could together;

and for her own part, she was willing, as she had said before, to do for Bessy the same as for one of her own children; and so, she would just mention a way, if permitted, for getting a few pounds, for present wants,"—and, coughing demurely, under her hand, she sat down, and seemed to await the permission to go on, of which she had spoken.

"Tell it to me, tell me any thing," sobbed Bessy, her face resting on her hands, and both hidden in her dishevelled black hair.

"'Twas likely," the landlady resumed, "that her precious dear had never raised money, in the way to be proposed, before; but poor people, like herself, could not pretend to be so ignorant; and so if there were any valuable little trinkets that she, 'the honest landlady,' could take to the pawnbrokers——"

"I have not a trinket in the world, but this," said Bessy, hastily interrupting her, and snatching out of her bosom her little marriage ring, with its guard, which hung by a white riband round her neck; "and though it *is* valuable—oh, more valuable to me than the wide world, without it, this night! yet I will keep it—keep it till I die for want of common food."

"That?" questioned the landlady—"Bless your precious little heart, it and t'other, together, wouldn't fetch us bread for two days, be they the best gold in the world, what they don't look to be."

"And I will keep it, henceforward, where it ought to be kept," Bessy went on, not noticing the landlady, for a moment, as she untied the knot of the little riband, and put the rings on her marriage finger:—"there—there I will keep them;—they have been hidden too long;—the world shall see them now; and this, only, I will put up again." She replaced the riband in her bosom, after kissing it: she brought to mind every look, word, and action of Lord Allen, when he had slipped the rings upon it, knotted it, and with promises of future redemption, and future happiness, hung it round her neck.

"And nothing of no more value, at all, ma'am?" pursued the landlady.

"Nothing," answered Bessy:—"listen, mistress; once I had some very pretty trinkets, and valuable ones too; but—my father was ruined in a law-suit—and became poor—and ill, along with being poor, and, unknown to him—I got them sold, and, for a time, supplied—oh, father, father!" Her mind flew back to the distant, the almost squalid chamber, where, that moment, without son or daughter, or common friend, he lay a lonely corpse; she saw his features fixed in death—in the ever-sealed expression of long suffering;—and, interrupting herself, Bessy yielded to all the agony of the picture.

"Poor dear gentleman!—and he is dead at last?" asked the landlady.

"Oh, mistress, mistress! woman! woman!" sobbed Bessy, her fit of grief increasing.

Stung by the last words, but not allowing her ill-humour to appear, the landlady waited awhile, and then suggested that, perhaps, Bessy could spare a few articles of wearing apparel?

"I have but a scanty supply of those, either," answered Bessy:—"you may see—here is the key of my little trunk:" she handed it, without raising her head.

The landlady soon made use of it. Bessy heard her utter many ejaculations of disappointment, if not of impatience and contempt, as she investigated the poor wardrobe of which it was the guardian. "However," the landlady added, "what must be, must be; and so, she would take just the few articles that there were any hopes of getting a few shillings for;" and having called them over, like an honest woman, and asked Bessy to see that all was right, she left the room with them, Bessy not having looked at all, but assented to every word—"Yes, yes; of course; yes." The next morning she found that she had not been left a thing of the slightest value or use, except the travelling clothes she then wore; and they were poor enough.

She feared, absolutely feared, to ask for writing materials, till the landlady should again make her appearance. The honest woman returned in about an hour, following one of her daughters, who bore in, upon an antiquated

round wooden tray, a cracked cup and saucer, a tin teapot,-a halfpenny-worth of watered milk, in a second old cup, two thin cuts of bread and butter on one plate, and certain brown sugar on another. The girl was well-looking, showily dressed,—full-dressed too, with a blue paste necklace round her fair neck, and seemed watchful, clever, and able to be pert. She courtesied, fashionably, after a manner, and said, "Serv'nt, miss—ma'am—I ask pardon—ma'am"—and left the room. Immediately after, Bessy heard loud laughter, below stairs, in which, she thought, a man joined.

The landlady, again without invitation, sat down, and pressed her lodger to refresh herself with a cup of tea; and assured her the tea was precious good: and hoped, for all that was come and gone, that things would come right, some day and soon, with her pretty little lady; and renewed her kind professions of doing all in her power; and (never giving an account of her transaction with the pawnbroker) surmised that a little agreeable society might be good for Bessy; and so, her parlour, below stairs, would always be open to her, where she would always be herself, or one or other of her daughters—who were good girls—if not both; and, perhaps, now and then, a cousin or two of theirs—rich young men, in business, in the town, and very nice young men; or, most likely, one or two days out of the week, a brother of the landlady: a most respectable old gentleman, who had been in the army, and had retired on full major's pay—and they always called him Major:—and what did Bessy think of stepping down to a bit of supper, this very evening, and —— "Oh no, no, no!" interrupted Bessy—"not for the world! I beg your pardon—I thank you much—but I can make no acquaintances—not for this night, at least—certainly not for this night—and all I will ask you to do for me, is to send up pens and ink—and some sheets of paper—and then allow me to write, alone, quite alone."

Again the landlady felt nettled, again kept down all show of what she felt, and complied graciously with Bessy's request; saying that, of course, she would be anxious to write letters, poor dear soul, under her circum-

stances, and wish to be alone, for some time; but as they *were* to be such good friends together (the event now taken for granted), some other evening, perhaps; some other evening: — and she withdrew.

Presently her gaily-dressed daughter re-appeared with writing materials, took away the old round tray, and left Bessy to herself.

At the renewed sound of rather boisterous laughter, below stairs, Bessy got up, trod softly to her door, locked and bolted it, and returned to her little table.

From a sudden change of mind, she now resolved not to write to Lord Allen or his sister. They had indeed treated her cruelly — falsely. Of that she became every moment more certain. They would not answer her letters, much less come to her — and tears of anguish and indignation streamed from her eyes at the thought; and her situation imperiously required that some friend should directly visit her and protect her — and who could that be, but her own brother?

To Michael Mutford, then, she determined to address herself. But could she do so, continuing the mystery in which she had been compelled to keep him? Would he answer her call, if she still refused him her confidence? Could he be expected to do so? With the supposed proof of her public shame in his mind, uncontradicted even by herself, could he? She answered for him — Certainly, naturally not. Bessy would tell him every thing, then; every thing, from the first to the last.

True, she had been forced to pledge herself, solemnly, by Lord Allen, that strict silence should be observed towards her brother, until certain results could be brought about: true ——

But it is better to give Bessy's reasons for renouncing her oath, in her own words, to Michael Mutford. For this purpose we transcribe at once the long letter which, that very night, she began to write to him, after much deliberation and argument with herself. It was not finished for some days, owing to interruptions which she experienced, and of which an account shall hereafter be given.

My dearest, dearest brother Michael,

In the situation I am at present placed in, and which I fully understand only after your sudden (and oh, how unexpected!) departure, I must sit down and write to you every word you ought to know about me. I must assure you, and prove to you, that your sister Bessy is not what you think her — bad, and a shame to you, and to the name of your family and hers. I must prove to you, that though she has been credulous, her credulity never led her into a greater fault than consenting to keep a secret from her father. (oh, dear, dear, adored father! look on me, to-night with my mother, from your place of rest and reward, in heaven!) and from you, Michael.

In coming to the resolution of speaking to you, without reserve, I seem to break a solemn vow. But I do not think or feel that I really break it. More, on that subject, by and by.

You have suspected me, Michael, in common with that wretched girl, Lucy Peat, of secret meetings with Lord Lintern's younger son, George Allen. Listen, however; you will certainly find his name mixed up with what I am going to write; but listen.

The person I am married to — yes, dear brother, married to — let that be a first word of comfort — here is my marriage ring on my finger at last, though I have worn it, for months, only round my neck — that person I saw, for the first time, while we were living in wicked Mr. Wiggins's furnished house.

You remember that, inside the hedge of the little garden, next to the road, there was a little arbour or summer-house. I was sitting there alone, one day, when you and my father — he was just able to go out with the help of your arm, then — had walked towards the sea; Lucy Peat was in the village, purchasing things for dinner; Mrs. Wiggins had also gone to market, so that, except her old husband, sick in his bed, I was, indeed, quite alone; no one either in the house or in the garden with me.

I heard some one running very, very fast along the road. I listened, a little frightened. The runner came near — quite close to the hedge; I got up to go into the house: as I issued through the opening into the little arbour, he jumped over the tall hedge like a greyhound, and alighted on his feet within a few yards of me.

I drew back. He seemed greatly agitated, and his whole face, person, air, and manner, overpowered me. He had no hat on — he was out of breath; and as he stood, for an instant, straight as a poplar tree, before me, I thought, young and slight as he was, I had never seen any creature so noble, so beautiful. His cheeks, indeed, were pale, but that very paleness was beauty; and his eyes, like stars, or like suns of jet, broke, in wonderful splendour, through the clouds of his loose curling black hair. Oh, Michael! do not chide me, nor scoff, nor smile at me, for these seemingly foolish words; I tell you, truly and sincerely, how he struck me, at that very first moment, — what he was like, and how I could not help feeling towards him. Oh, I did love him, indeed, "at first sight," (as 'tis said, oftener in jest and sneers than in any belief of any such thing,) though it was afterwards, and upon reflection, and from seeing him, and speaking with him, again and again, that I knew I had done so.

Well, he stood one moment, flashing such looks on me! and then he glanced around him, anxiously, and watchfully — and then he said, "Madam — young lady — pray let me conceal myself, a moment, in this garden — I am pursued by wretches who, without any crime or fault of mine to deserve it, wish to do me harm — bodily harm; pray, pray let me pass into that little arbour."

I know not now what I said, Michael, but it was assent to what he asked; and with profuse thanks he darted through the opening after me, and dropped on the garden seat, panting and sighing, nay, Michael, even groaning piteously. Yes, piteously; for I pitied him from my very heart — and could I choose but do so, after seeing him in such a plight, and hearing him say what he did? Let me not conceal from you, that when he spoke — or

at least a few moments after — I thought, in my own mind, I had never, never seen any one of such a fine address.

"I am sorry my father or my brother is not at home to do better for you," I said, in reply to repetitions of his acknowledgments, after some time, when he was calmer: — "they could, if necessary, conceal you in the house."

"No, no," he resumed, "'t is better as it is; the fewer that see me at present the better; and, indeed," he continued, rising and inclining his noble head, "I — do not be offended, nor think me disrespectful if I say — I am glad, very glad, to have the honour and the happiness of such a protectress — and such a one only."

"But my father and brother," I told him, "will soon come home for dinner — and then ——"

"You must leave me, I know," he interrupted. "Yes, though your going away will grieve me as much as the misery which drove me to you, — I know you must: — indeed, I know that nothing but the greatest goodness and kindness could have made you stay with me one moment; — so, if I can, I must be content, hiding here, alone, till nightfall — though, without you — a guardian angel to me, in very truth and fact — to watch for me, 't is hard to say how soon I may be detected, and again exposed to outrage that my soul abhors, and that, as I have already assured you, I do not merit."

"I believe you do not merit it, whatever it is," I said — very foolishly, to be sure.

"Do you?" he asked, his voice so spirited, and his grand eyes burning with delight — "do you, indeed? God bless you for the word, then; and I thank you, deeply, and while I live shall — *can* — never forget it or you."

Indeed, Michael, while he spoke the last words, his voice trembled, and tears dimmed his eyes.

"But why need you stay here, alone, and in danger?" I demanded. "I was going to say that *when* my father and brother come back, they will surely be most happy to give you a secret room in the house."

"Thanks — thanks, again — may I ask you your father's name?"

I told it. He started, and seemed greatly agitated again, though not as he had been, when he jumped (you classic scholars would say Actæon-like, Michael,) into the garden.

"Mutford?" he repeated — "Robert Mutford?"

I assented, asking if he knew my father?

"And your brother"—he went on, not noticing my question — "is his name Michael?"

I said yes, again, much astonished, as you will easily believe.

"Of Mutford Abbey, Yorkshire?" he still asked; and when I replied, his emotion appeared to change into something grave and admiring; and he held down his head, put his hand to his forehead, or passed its outspread fingers through his hair (how well I remember every little action, you will say!) — and I heard him whisper to himself — "Surprising — providential — perhaps a happy, happy chance," — and in saying the last words he looked up at me with an expression which I could not withstand, and which I felt to be strange and unusual, though it did not offend me.

"Then, as you seem to know my father and brother, shall I mention your situation to them?" I resumed. "No — no — pray, allow me a moment's thought — no, dear young lady — dear, dear Miss Mutford, excuse me." I suppose he saw me look displeased, as well as blushing — "You cannot imagine the right I have to address you so — though you shall know it yet — but I must say no, for the present, to your kind wish to have me taken care of by your family — to have them know we have met — to have them know I am here — for, if they did know who *is* here, alas, alas, I fear they would be little disposed to do me a kindness."

"Why? — have you ever offended my father or my brother? or injured them?"

"Never, I solemnly assure you — never, even in thought; on the contrary, I have been striving to befriend them — even though they and I have never yet met."

"Then, surely, if you let them know that, there can be no doubt of your being kindly received by them."

"There would, though, I am certain."

"Very strange," I said — "such conduct on their part would be unjust and ungenerous — and I will not suppose so of my father or my brother, for one moment."

"Nor do I suppose so of them; I could not, of *your* father or brother, if I had no other reason; still, let me assure you that they would scarce protect me from danger, even if I told them I was their friend — their active friend."

"But why?"

"Because they would not believe me."

"And on what grounds not believe you?"

"Because they hate me."

I looked and spoke in great surprise.

"Yes — hate me — and at present they have natural reasons for doing so."

"Without — as you seem to say — having seen you?"

"Without having seen me. I have — or *had*, rather, some friends whom they detest, and they attribute to me feelings towards them in common with those friends. You still seem astonished, and I do not wonder. I will explain to you — to *you*, at least — another time, if you be good and kind enough to afford me the opportunity. At present, I dread to do so."

"Dread it? that is the most extraordinary word you have yet spoken: what can you dread from me?"

"That *you* might hate me, too." As he looked at me, saying this in the softest voice, his eyes again grew moist, Michael.

My father and you entered the garden at that moment, and saved me an answer — and I was glad of it. I mentioned the circumstance to him.

"Then do not let me keep you an instant from them," he said, sighing deeply. — "Do you suppose I shall be free of observation, here, for a few hours?"

I knew he scarcely could. You sometimes sat down in the little summer-house, yourself, Michael, after dinner, with your pencil or note-book; sometimes Lucy Peat went into it, to indulge her moody sullenness; and even the bold Mrs. Wiggins would visit it, though she had no right, and it was her foolish tongue I feared most on his account, if,

indeed, he could incur danger, by being betrayed to the wretches (so he had called them) who were in pursuit of him. These thoughts made me hesitate at his question. But, at last, I took a sudden — and you will say a strange — resolution, on the strength of which I ventured to promise him that no one should intrude into the arbour till he left it.

He thanked me again, as I was about to go to the house. His voice struck me as remarkable. It was faint and hoarse. I turned and looked at him. He was pale as a corpse; his head had fallen back against the thickly-woven branches of the arbour, his eyes were closed, his lips apart, and livid; his arms dropped at either side. I feared he was dying suddenly, and could scarce keep myself from screaming. Not knowing what I did, I ran to him, put my salts to him to smell, and wiped the cold perspiration from his forehead. It was very strange, I own, to see me so circumstanced in that little summer-house, with a young gentleman, whose name, even, I did not know. But could I help it? I declare to you, again, Michael, that I had not presence of mind enough to be conscious of my own actions.

He revived, opening his beautiful eyes upon me, with another sad, sad sigh; when he understood I was near him, he smiled like an archangel, and — without intending disrespect, I am sure, but in a mere impulse of gratitude for my little attentions — took my hand, very, very gently — as the gentlest brother might. Had he been perfectly master of himself, — quite restored to his senses and his strength, I mean, — I would have withdrawn my hand from his, of course: but, making allowance for his weak state, and indeed afraid that my abruptness might give him a relapse, I allowed him to hold it for a moment.

He apologised for the trouble he had given me — thanked me over and over — and while I could only repeat — "But you are better — are you not?" he saw some silly tears, which I vainly strove to hide by looking down; and said, in a voice that sounded on the strings of my very heart — "What! this for me? this sweet pity for me?" and before I could hinder him, his lip touched my hand which he still held.

Now I took away my hand, but — I must speak the truth — not in as marked a manner as I ought to have done. I knew I ought to feel and to seem angry, but I could not.

"Have you been lately ill before to-day?" I asked. He gave me such an answer, Michael, as made me suddenly leave the arbour, to hide the real crying fit it started. "Not exactly ill," he said, "but he had suffered much oppression — even personal oppression, for the last month; — and for all that day, he had been fatiguing himself, trying to escape his persecutors; and that, he supposed, must have so suddenly overpowered him — that, and fasting all day."

Oh, dear Michael, I ran in from the garden up to my little room, and cried there as I had not done before since my mother's death; yet there was some joy in my sorrow, as we are told, that "even in laughter the heart is sorrowful." I once or twice detected myself smiling, while my eyes poured tears, and the beating of my heart, and the tremor of my limbs, were not accompanied with a sensation of unhappiness. I fell on my knees and prayed, too; though I do not know or recollect, now, for what I prayed. Suddenly I started up at the thought of him, alone in the summer-house, and exposed to intrusion, and weak from hunger. My tears stopped, I bathed my eyes, and went down stairs.

Do you remember, Michael, a day that you called me a foolish little thing, and said my senses were leaving me, because I begged and prayed of you to beg and pray of my father to let me dine in the garden, and sit out there, till nightfall, before the little arbour, watching a bird that I wanted to tame, and that I said I had tied by the leg, with a soft silk thread, to a branch of one of the shrubs? That was the day I am now speaking of. And now, dear brother, you know what bird I meant, and you will frown at me for the little equivocation, and so you ought; I do so at myself. But you did get me leave to follow my whim that day, and I did dine off my little work-table, a short distance from the opening of the arbour, and right in the path to it; and Lucy Peat attended me, and whenever she was present I pretended to be speaking and chirping to my

bird in the arbour, which I said I had purchased of a little boy at the garden gate, and that he was quite a wild bird, and very shy and sullen, but that I was sure I should soon tame him;—more stories, Michael, to be forgiven me.—But, when Lucy Peat went away, and that I made certain she could not see me, and that no one else was in view, what do you think I did then, Michael?—Something that I feel myself getting red to think of this moment, though Lord Allen is at present my husband—and that I am sure I do not know how I got through then, for trembling, blushing, and the greatest shame and confusion. Indeed, Michael, I stole softly with my chicken, and my bread, and my fruit, and my glass of water, into the summer-house, and, without even looking at him, put them down on the seat beside him, and then got out again, as well and as fast I could, not speaking a single word, nor taking any notice of his refusals to eat *my* dinner, as he said, however he came to know that.

Again, Michael, do you remember coming out to me after dinner that evening, and finding me sitting full in the path to the summer-house, pretending to talk and chirp to my bird? and your scolding me for sitting out so late—the twilight had just begun to come on—and your wanting to pass and see my bird, and my beseeching you not, and talking loud and fast to you, and at last crying you out of your intention, and out of the garden?

You had scarcely disappeared when I heard my name called, in the gentlest whisper. I re-entered the arbour, scarce able to walk—though I am sure I cannot tell why I should have been so agitated; but I trembled more than ever, breathed tightly, felt my limbs weak, and my head confused.

"Good night," he said—"only good night; I will not say farewell; it would sound as if we were never to meet again—or, at least, not for a long while; and I cannot bear to think of that; and I do supplicate you to see me again to-morrow, on the shingles by the sea-side, about a mile from the village, towards the point, at your walking hour—allow me to say two o'clock?"

I did not—could not answer him a word—a breath.

"If for nothing else," he continued, "at least to hear the explanation I owe you."

"Well; very well; for that," I said at last.

"Good night, then;" he extended his hand, as people commonly do at parting, so I gave mine; "good night, and I need not pray that God will bless you for your gentle and graceful hospitality to me this day. Good night; you do not know how much good you have done —how much must flow from your generous conduct. You do not know how much, how deliciously you have comforted a heart that, till a few hours ago, was sore and dark from unmerited sufferings and outrage. Indeed, indeed, to say I am grateful, deeply, deeply grateful, would faintly express my sense of obligation. Good night; you weep for me again? Miss Mutford—— But what am I going to say? Good night — you would hate me for the selfish abruptness — I fear you would — Good night — and yet" — he let go my hand, bowed, at some distance from me, his own hand pressed against his heart, and ended in a low, but never-to-be-forgotten tone — "If ever goodness, gentleness, guilelessness, grace, youth and beauty, have inspired lasting and solemn love in a few hours, *I* love, unalterably, solemnly, this moment."

He was near to the opening of the little arbour, and the next moment, dear Michael, my bird had flown.

You came out of the house to seek me again, and I told you he had flown, and that I was out of spirits, as you found me, for that reason. How long I had been sitting alone in the summer-house, until you entered it, I cannot tell. I only know that there I sat, entranced in happiness, if ever a human creature was so. I have told you I loved him almost the first moment I saw him. Oh, Michael, what pride, what high and delightful pride did I feel at his parting avowal! What a being he appeared to me — how beautiful, how noble, how refined, how spirited — and yet how gentle! and to think — to feel — to know he would be my own! — indeed, dearest brother, I was a very happy girl. So happy, that every thing around me, though I but vaguely considered or apprehended any object, seemed making me happy. Now and then I was conscious of the

soft night-breeze on my cheek, and it was pleasure; a leaf rustled, and I heard harmony; and, as I sat looking out inattentively through the nearly closed entrance into my bower of (I know it was) romance, shall I ever forget the loveliness of the planet of romance, and of love, as she arose over the fringy outline of distant trees, and glanced her light into me, through and between clustering and drooping leaves—as if through eyelashes—every one of which she turned into glory! And yet I recollect all that as if I had not perfectly observed it—as if it had been the moon, and the moonlight, and the sky, and the gilded foliage of a blessed dream; and I like it for its very uncertainty.

These were my first sensations—I do not call them thoughts—I had none—after he went away. When you led me into the house, and I pleaded bad spirits for the loss of my bird, and retired to my room for the night, I had something like distinct reflection. Who was he? why so persecuted? how our friend, and without our knowing it? and an object of hatred to you, Michael, and to my father, if known by you? And I answered to myself—he is a gentleman of the very, very highest stamp, mind, and breeding; and to-morrow I shall know his name;—they are wretches, indeed, who persecute him; for, whatever they charge against him, he is surely, surely, incapable of meriting such horrid treatment; and he is our friend, because he has heard of our misfortunes, and because he has a heart to make him the friend of the unfortunate wherever he meets them—and as to his fears of being hated by my father and brother, that is his only mistake.

Michael, you have already called me worse than romantic, childish, imprudent, since you began to read. When you found me agreeing to meet him by the sea, you laid down the paper, and chided your sister severely in your heart. Now, as you find that reflection added only strength to my purpose, I dread to imagine what you think of me. Nor can I offer any excuse for myself. I will not ask you to consider the circumstances of my bringing-up; my total seclusion from the world; my constant reading of books

which (though otherwise good, beautiful and harmless, else you would not have chosen them for me) *do* nurture the romance of a girl's heart, and scarce teach her caution and incredulity, and common, that is, worldly sense. Nothing of this do I plead. I only say — I only admit that I was infatuated; that he inspired me with a confidence, a sense of his high-mindedness and his honour, upon which my heart reposed as a child upon flowers; — that the thought of not seeing him again would have killed me — that, in a word, I could have died to save him from an injury, instead of suspecting him for a moment. Yes, Michael, that evening, as I watched for him in the garden, I could have kept off with my life — if that would have kept off any one, or any thing — whatever person or persons might have come to harm him in that little arbour.

So, Michael, I went to walk the next day alone, by the sea; and, if my crime was great, it met its punishment for that time, at least. He had been waiting for me in some alarm, he said; and his disturbed eyes glanced up the cliffs, which, at the place of our meeting, were not high; as he said this, and even while he looked, his emotion increased — and oh, Michael, with cause. I saw two men, of large stature, scramble down the cliff; he started as if to run from them; his eyes met mine, and he stood still. They hastened up to him, and commanded him to return home in their company. He refused. They insisted. He defied them — they threatened force; he braved them again; he railed — he reviled — he changed, oh, he changed, dear brother, into the most terribly angry man I had ever seen, or could have dreamt of! His voice — his words — his eyes — his erect figure — his raised and clenched hand — can I ever forget them! One of the men advanced to take his arm. He struck him to his feet. He sprang upon the other, and, with one blow, felled him too. But they closed upon him together — and then, Michael, then I saw him beaten, beaten, Michael, in his turn, by those rude, strong, great men; and, at last, in spite of all his resistance — all his threats, — nay, and fearful imprecations — they forced him off along with them, while I stood screaming and wringing my hands, in

excessive terror and wonder, unable to hear or to comprehend the full words he tried to address to me, at parting. One speech only I did catch; it was a request not to mention to my own family, or to a human being, that we had ever met, until we could meet again: and at this I heard the savage men laugh, and heard him roar at them again, until they were out of sight.

You will imagine my state of mind afterwards, Michael. The shocking mystery of who and what he could be, who was thus oppressed and degraded, and deprived of his liberty, in the open day, and in a free country, overshadowed my heart, till it made my love shudder. But I was soon to learn his name and station, at least. You took me with you, in a few days, to Lord Lintern's; you know how his sudden bursting into the room affected me; how the sight of me affected him, too, though he was able to suppress all strong appearance of a previous knowledge of me (as he afterwards told me), asking his brother George who you and I were, with other things.

When I regained my senses, that day, I cannot describe to you how I felt and thought, such a bustle of different sensations of pain and pleasure was within me. You will not think it unnatural that I was gratified at finding him prove to be of elevated station in the world; the fact also flattered my self-opinion, I believe, because I had from the first set him down in my own mind for a superior being in every way. But it shocked me to see him on such terms with his father; and the continued mystery of the grounds of disagreement between them, and of how Lord Lintern could have the right to oppress him in such a manner, kept me uneasy and trembling. Pray bear in mind, dear Michael, that I was still ignorant of Lord Lintern's relationship to us.

One thing only grew distinct, more distinct than ever to my thoughts, — the necessity of concealing, for the present, from every one, that he and I were friends. The very discovery of his name and rank, and my terror of his tyrannical father, made me become doubly resolved on this point. Indeed, his own last words, when the men forced him off on the shingles, would have sealed my lips. You

asked me some questions about him, and also about his brother, — his bad brother, — George, riding home that day, and in answering you, Michael, I first began to dissimulate with you.

Now I come to something very, very disagreeable. In making it clear to you, at once, I shall join to what happened to myself at the time, facts which Augustus afterwards told me.

He thought his young brother a friend. He made him, in a degree, a confidant. He got him to consent, some days after we were at Lord Lintern's, to convey a letter to me. George Allen gave the letter to Lucy Peat as from himself, and Lucy delivered it to me, under the impression that he had written it, and that he was encouraged by me in his attentions. She took back a message, in answer, and still George Allen allowed her to believe that it was sent to him. Of this I knew nothing, then, and the unhappy mistake went on, under other circumstances. In fact I accepted more letters from her written by Augustus, and messages also, and still replied to him through her. It was very miserable that this should have happened: all my late and present suffering, the most odious part at least, flows from it: and it seems strange, too, that it *could* have happened; but many things helped to cause it and to keep it up. George Allen, for his own views, commanded Lucy, as she herself told me, never to mention his name even to me, but always in speaking of him to say "he," and I considered this only as necessary caution; you may be sure I never breathed the name to her; and then the letters and messages I received could be written or spoken, in the first instance, by no one but Lord Allen; so how should I have suspected any thing like that which was occurring?

I soon began to think, indeed, that Lord Allen wrote to me in a strange and incoherent tone. He complained of the coldness of my verbal answers to him, and at length accused me of forgetting him. This puzzled as well as distressed me, for, in truth, I had never sent him an unkind message. Recollecting that my words were to be conveyed through Lucy Peat, I chose them carefully,

indeed, as a lady ought, but still they were friendly and sufficient, coming *from* a lady. Let me at once explain to you, dear Michael, that George Allen caused this misunderstanding between us. It was his object to divert his brother from thinking of me, and, although he punctually gave his letters to Lucy Peat, in order to continue his main plan, still he never faithfully reported to Augustus the messages from me which the girl gave him under the impression, let me repeat, that they were for himself. I will add, here, that none of the letters I received contained any important matter; no allusion was made to the cause of the extraordinary persecutions suffered by the writer, or to the other topics which were still such mysteries to me.

At length George Allen endeavoured to draw his vile plot to a close. He sent me word that "*he*," by which of course I understood Augustus, was now free to renew our personal acquaintance, and requested me to meet him at a certain time and place. Fortunately, dear Michael, the state of my father's health made me send a refusal. The intimation was repeated. Again and again, I was compelled to remain at home. Then came a message, through Lucy, which shocked and offended me with Augustus, as I thought; though I ought to have known he never could have dictated such a one. He prayed me to admit "*him*," into the house, late at night. I turned away from Lucy, and did not answer at all; and this happened more than once.

I have called it fortunate that I was unable to go out, in answer to the first messages requesting me to do so. It was still more providential that, while I had previously walked out alone, or with horrid Lucy Peat, after the day at Lord Lintern's, George Allen never encountered me in the lonely places I used to frequent. I am sure that if I ever had happened to have arranged some time beforehand with Lucy Peat that we were to walk together, she would have betrayed me to him; that is, sent him word where to meet us, and so exposed me to his insulting attentions.

Of a sudden, all verbal or written communications from Augustus, or in his name, ceased. This I will here explain to you also. He had again broken from his father's

house, and was known to be secreted in the neighbourhood, though no one could tell where; and the fact made his brother afraid of continuing his odious impositions on him and me, lest he should be detected by Augustus. This was just before you were taken to the smuggler's house, Michael. While you were there, I saw Augustus often, without the knowledge of Lucy Peat or of any other person. Our first re-meeting I shall take notice of rather particularly.

You know the garden, about a mile from what was our house at that time, where you and I used sometimes to walk, with the permission of its old owner. You know it is of great extent, the old man and his son cultivating it for the vegetables and fruit it yields, on the sale of which they live: you know, too, that it is well enclosed, very little frequented, and very solitary. I had walked out alone in the evening, — at my poor father's request too, — for my health (though he afterwards wished me to remain at home). I was sitting reading, or trying to read in a corner of that garden, remote from the gardener's house. Lord Allen walked up to me. He had been secreted by the old man in the house, or rather by the old man's wife, who is not of that county, and had been his nurse in another; and he had seen me enter the garden.

His appearance afflicted me as well as surprised me. He was thinner, paler, and more care-worn, if not irritated, than when I had seen him last: but I did not yield to my interest for him at the moment. I recollected the unworthy message which I thought had been his, and he saw me changed towards him. He held out his hand: I would not take it.

"Then I was right in what I feared," he said, mournfully, yet, I thought, too vehemently also, — "and you, too, forsake me! — Stop, Miss Mutford, a moment!" he continued, as I made a show of walking away, not liking his tone, particularly with the impression I have mentioned on my mind, "only stop and hear me! If you do not, you will indeed make me what the world wants to make me, by saying I *am!*"

His manner, and these, to me, perfectly unaccountable words, had a spell in them that fixed me to the spot.

"We must explain now or never," he continued, speaking very rapidly, and sometimes his voice had an effect on me like the sound of a trumpet. "You remember our last parting? — Have you since learned who those men were, Miss Mutford?"

"I answered that I had not allowed myself the opportunity."

"Then I will tell you. They were my keepers."

"Keepers! what do you mean?"

"Keepers, such as are usually hired to take care of a madman," he answered, his features — above all, his eyes — and his cadences growing wild and troubled, no doubt at a recollection of what he had so lately been enduring. You will fancy how I felt, Michael: but I did not say a word. I drew back, I believe, my looks fixed on him.

"Yes," he went on, "and I need not remind you that they treat me as the laws allow poor mad wretches to be treated; yes, and my father says I *am* mad; and my brother, and my sisters, except one, and the doctors; and because the doctors say it, the laws vouch it to be true; and so, in the eyes of his family, the world, and the law, you have to boast of the acquaintance of a madman, Miss Mutford."

I believed him: nay, I believed more than he wished; I believed the law was right. His vehement manner, never before shown to me, and the change in the very lines of his face, from continual excitement and even personal sufferings, to say nothing of his extraordinary eyes, convinced me for a moment that I had loved and been beloved by a furious lunatic; — and oh, Michael! are you not surprised that the thought left me life for an instant!

I remember still stepping back from him, and gasping, and trying to scream, but could not; and the deathlike, horrible turn in my heart, until I fell.

A decent and kindly-featured old woman was taking care of me, in an humble but nice little parlour, when I came to myself. He did not appear. I was in the gardener's house, and this was his wife, Augustus's old

nurse. She spoke soothingly and respectfully to me, and, in a short time, we had a long conversation together, all about her foster child, Lord Allen. Oh, how that conversation relieved my heart!

She assured me, over and over, that, though he had been treated for mad, he was, and always had been perfectly in his right mind, and would soon prove the fact to the world, now that he had once more recovered his freedom, and was able to take steps to bring himself justice. Who could give a better opinion on him than she who had nursed him in her arms, and scarce ever lost sight of him (his affection for her never permitting her to do so) from that to the present day? No, no, Heaven forgive her, she said, if she believed in her heart that there were reasons for making him out a madman in the eyes of the world; yes — she added, expressively to me — and reasons which I, and my father and brother were concerned in, more than we suspected.

This hint reminded me of something Augustus had said to me in the summer-house, in our garden, and I asked her to explain.

She answered, that she did not think it might be quite agreeable to him to do so; he had never talked to her on the subject, openly, at least; she had only her own notions; but perhaps I would soon hear something from himself.

That was not likely, I said; for under all the circumstances, it was better, in my opinion, that he and I should give up farther acquaintance.

"What, Miss Mutford!" she cried, "show him a cold face now, when he has not a friend left in the world but you! — the only sister that loves him, and doesn't believe the things said against him, sent away from her father's house, to keep them far asunder! and his very heart and soul lightened at the thought of making a friend of you! — your own cousin, poor dear young gentleman!"

"My cousin!" I repeated; and now, Michael, for the first time, I learned that my father and Lord Lintern were half brothers: that Lord Allen was the elder son of the man whom you detested and loathed; whom I myself shrunk from, as the destroyer of us all.

My heart had been filled with a great terror of him, when I thought he was mad: now he stood before it, for an instant, as a disliked rather than a loved object, as he had stood before it, ere we met in the arbour, though then I had never seen him. Yes, Michael, for a short time, I felt as my father's daughter and as my brother's sister ought to feel. But, alas, only for a short time.

A little girl entered, and put an open letter into my hand. It craved pardon for his ungenerous vehemence in the garden, a few moments before, adding that his good old nurse would perhaps state facts to me which might excuse him. It implored me not to hate him now, when I had discovered that he was Lord Lintern's son; and it modestly added reasons why I should not. In fact, the hints which the old woman would not explain to me, his letter did. I gathered from it, that he never had been persecuted by his father till he had communicated to him his discovery of certain evidence which could confer, beyond a question, upon my father, upon you, and myself, the long-contested property then in Lord Lintern's possession: that, although his father disbelieved him, he would soon prove the facts — first establishing his own competence to be a witness in a court of justice; that he was about to go to London for the double purpose; that inevitably, if his father blindly continued to refuse us our rights, his father's son would confer them on us; that he had delayed his journey for some days, only in the hope of seeing me again; and now he supplicated me anew to forgive his recent violence, and permit him to descend to me from his chamber.

Believing every word of this letter, as I did, can you wonder that my former feelings towards him should return? — should increase? — that if I thought of him nobly before, he should appear to me as magnanimous as an angel now? I recollected, too, that it was not his interest for me which had bribed him into his high resolve towards us, even against his own interests and family character — for long before we met he had been suffering terribly on account of his just and generous intentions. Oh, Michael,

at the thought of my father and you relieved by him from misery, I blessed his name in my very heart!

I was weeping plentifully over the last sentences of his letter. The old woman, having watched her time, I suppose, did plead his excuse for his wildness in her garden. He had but just got up from his bed, she said, where he had lain ill, ever since his escape from his father's, to the moment he saw me come in at the garden gate; and he had arisen against her advice, being yet too feverish and irritated to go out, particularly to meet me, of whose cold messages to him, *through his brother George*, she had heard him complaining.

At the mention of his brother, a misgiving of what had been going on started up in my mind. Though you might not have perceived it, Michael, I felt much inconvenienced, that first day at Lord Lintern's, by the looks and manner of George Allen, before Augustus broke into the room. I believed him capable of offending me, and since it now appeared that Augustus had made him a confidant, of playing false to us both, in the view of preparing an opportunity for doing so. My messages, I concluded at once, had been misrepresented; and I started with pleasure at the equal certainty that Augustus had never sent me any words capable of making me think ill of him.

"And if I forgave him, would I not see him?" the old woman asked. I hesitated — alluded to his illness.

"Oh," she said, "since he has come down stairs once this evening, who knows but coming down again may do him good?" And she went to the door, and said in a loud voice — "My Lord, why here be your new cousin and your old nurse a-wondering what you can be a-doing up there!"

The old woman led him by the hand to me. He requested me to let him sit with us. I spent a blessed hour near to him that evening. There were fruit and some other refreshments, and he talked to me of all he intended to do. I scarcely opened my lips. I scarcely looked at him: but I heard him — and on such topics, Michael!

Amongst other things, he told me he had been writing of me to his sister Ellen — for though his father did not

suspect it, he knew the place of her present retreat; and he showed me an answer from her, in which my name was mentioned in sweet flattery, because he had praised me. I also discovered from it, that you and Augustus's sister had just met under the same roof, although she refrained from making herself known to you, for reasons Augustus knew; and indeed, dear Michael, she praised you too in a way that I was proud of, and that then, alas, made me form, like the child and fool I was, happy hopes in your regard.

I believe one of his reasons for producing her letter must have been, to lead to what followed. He would explain to me why Lady Ellen hid her name from you—and, at the same time, why he had requested, and still implored me, not yet to admit to my father and my brother that he and I were likely to be friends. Your hatred of Lord Lintern extended to all his family, he said; and this was natural: still, you hated with such liveliness and impatience of all contact with any one of them, that if you had at present the slightest suspicion of our acquaintance, you would interpose, and make your father interpose also, to end it for ever. That, in the first place—(he had not premised it should be first).

Then, his sister, as well as himself, had strong and natural hopes of the two families being all good friends together, at no distant time. But, in your immediate state of excitement, did you know who she was, you would detest her personally; and her sincere sorrow for our undeserved sufferings, at her father's hands, could not allow her to expose herself to that additional humiliation.

True, he might at once make known to you that he was already your friend, and for some time had been. But in doing so, he should also give, in order to obtain belief, the grounds of his interest; in fact, declare the evidence he had gained in our favour; and, upon discovery of it, even from him, how might your present state of feelings lead you to act? Would you wait to allow him to proceed towards his point, gradually and cautiously? or would you abruptly and disdainfully, and directly summon him before a court of justice, and spurning all personal conciliation, compel

him, at your own time, and in your own manner, to come forward? While there was a fear, a doubt that you would, he must avoid all communication with you. Though his father had ill-treated him, as well as you, he was bound to try one last appeal to his sense of justice and humanity —if not a succession of appeals — before he appeared against him, upon a public trial, as an accusing witness; and to insure the opportunity for this, prudence and good feeling recommended the course he had made up his mind to adopt towards you. His sister strongly advised it too; and so did a most excellent friend of his sister, a Mr. Snow.

One other point remained for my consideration. It was a wretched one. I was aware of the opinions of two or three persons as to the soundness of his mind. Till he could establish his sanity, in a formal manner, he remained incapacitated from giving evidence on such questions as we were speaking of, or indeed on any other. And, upon his arrival in London, his first attention must be directed to that consideration. But for the present, you, Michael, as well as others, might imagine him a lunatic; and so, if you did not embarrass him, as he first supposed, you would laugh at his assertions of being able to befriend you. In this view, giving you his immediate confidence would be as useless as, in the other, it was dangerous.

Need I tell you that I fully agreed in all he said? It followed that I renewed my promises of holding secret these matters, as well as my meeting with him, for some time. He began to suggest, though very delicately, that my love for my father and you might possibly throw me off my guard: I was a little hurt, I suppose; at all events, in a sudden impulse, I volunteered the most solemn vow — I may call it oath — of secrecy.

We parted — but not before he engaged me to say I would see him again, early, very early next morning, in the gardener's parlour. Immediately afterwards, he assured me he should hasten to London.

I kept my word. It was not, I believe, more than four o'clock when the old nurse received me at the garden gate. Now he discovered that it would be much better for him not to go to London till that night, in order to avoid de-

tection: I fear I kept him dallying with his important purpose. In fact, I saw him after dinner, for a short time, the same evening; and, indeed, Michael, then I urged him to go—and he did.

He has since informed me that he sent a letter to his father beforehand, telling him of his being about to leave the neighbourhood. This coming, of course, to the knowledge of George Allen, relieved him of his forbearance towards me, and I was again troubled with his messages, through Lucy, still in Augustus's name. But now, I never replied to her at all, and never went out. My father's wishes on that subject were unnecessarily expressed to me: though, I presume, he informed you that George Allen had been seen near to our poor lodgings, indeed even in the back-yard—and that once he had had the assurance to knock at the door to ask after me. 'T is necessary I should say, Michael, that I did not immediately tell Augustus my suspicion of his brother: 't was a disagreeable subject; he could not bear the irritation, either; though now I regret my silence.

You returned to us from the smuggler's house, dear Michael. Remember the conversations we then had together, and you will find them, upon my part, accounted for. When you first began to question me, I feared you would speak of Augustus. You spoke only of his bad brother. Greatly relieved, I could with perfect truth assure you that he and I had never met. Yet, there must have seemed to you a strange hesitation and confusion in my manner. Oh, above all, all things, I dreaded to stand before our suffering father under doubtful circumstances, which I could not, on account of my oath, perfectly explain away! But no, indeed, dearest brother, George Allen and I had never met, then—except once, in your company. Afterwards, indeed, very soon afterwards, he did surprise me alone—and, I believe, by the contrivance of abominable Lucy Peat—very near to the house; yes, alone; even during the very time I knew you were watching me, on his account; and then, Michael, though he brought tears to my eyes, and blushes to my cheeks, he also brought spirit to my heart, and I replied to him, and

left him, as your sister Bessy ought to have done. Lucy Peat met me as I turned home, and pretended to condole with me.

You took me to London, Michael. Augustus soon discovered my residence, and, almost as soon, saw me. The servant girl of the house gave me letters from him, nay — and I now am very sorry on her account, for I believe she has suffered for it — arranged that we should meet in the parlour, for a few moments, each time, while my old schoolmistress used to be engaged above stairs. Let me go farther, and admit at once, that, in all his letters and conversations, he now pressed me to become his wife, under the strictest secrecy. To gain my assent, he pleaded the chance of our being suddenly separated for ever, by the interference of either of our families, even during the short time that the steps were taking to make both good friends. He dwelt again on the great mutual hatred existing between you and his father, and the certainty — the, to him, dreadful certainty — that if you (and you so near) or Lord Lintern (and he on the watch to find out Augustus) had a hint of our attachment, something would be done, by one or the other, to make — at least *his* life miserable to his dying day. Do me the justice of believing, dear Michael, that, girl as I was, I could not, for a long while, bear to entertain in my mind what he urged me to do. Repeated solicitations, however, of the most impassioned kind — his agitation — fears for his health — full dependence on the happy results to you and my father from his efforts, to say nothing of what I have already avowed, my great love for him, finally won my consent. I took the servant girl out with me, for a ride: he met us; and, in her presence, Lord Allen and I were married by special licence.

The next day, he told me that he had obtained from eminent physicians certain certificates, and had given them to his brother George, just then arrived in town, to convey to his law adviser. I felt my heart sicken; and I could not help expressing my fears that the certificates might be fairly disposed of. He questioned me, as he had a right to do; and, by degrees, got me to confess all I knew

of the treachery of his brother to us both. The lady of the house was spending the evening out, and we had sat, longer than usual, in her parlour. It was twilight; yet I saw the terrible workings of his face.

"Has he been here to ask for you, Bessy, since he came to town?" Augustus demanded.

I admitted that I had seen him passing before the windows, late in the day. I was speaking, when George Allen walked close by the window of the room we were sitting in. Augustus knew him at a glance—I believe they knew each other, for George had peered through the glass. My husband bounded out into the street, regardless of my entreaties. I saw the brothers meet, a short distance from the door: I saw them walk away, a short distance; and then, suddenly, I saw Augustus turn upon him, seize him, and almost dash him to the ground; and I have never beheld nor heard from either of them since. 'T is true, dear Michael: upon that evening, how many—oh, how many! months ago, Lord Allen and I had our last interview.

My brother, my brother, my brother, now pity me. You and I have been before Lord Lintern, together, a second time. Oh, I knew that Lucy Peat's experienced opinion of my state of health was true! And oh, Michael, why did I not, at that moment, make up my mind not to regard my vow of secrecy as any longer binding?

Have you learned that, after you left me alone with Lord Lintern, the cruel overseer, and Lucy Peat, I *did* inform him who was the father of my poor little baby? But hold! did I so, *indeed!* The thought starts up, for the first time—the doubt—the fear that Lord Lintern may not have distinctly understood me. Let me stop to think.

No, Michael—I am now quite sure that the words I wrote on a slip of paper, and handed to him, were—"*Your son*, and *my* husband—save *him*, as well as *me!*" and here, you see, I did not name Augustus. And his son George would sooner occur to him as meant than his son Augustus. For many reasons it may have been so: on account of Augustus's supposed madness, and his close confinement, except at intervals; yes, and on account of George

Allen's character, too, which could scarce be unknown to his father. And then, how Lord Lintern must have scoffed at the notion of such a person — one so cold and cautious, as well as so proud, — committing himself in a marriage with poor me!

After thinking again, I have decided on a way of repairing my oversight — the oversight of that moment of agony, when my mind, and heart, and soul, were full of but *one* son of Lord Lintern! This is what I will do, Michael: send my packet, which I have now nearly finished, to Lord Lintern, in the first instance; ask him to read it, every word, and then forward it to you. And, now that I recollect, I must indeed send it, first, to some person likely to know where you are at present — for, God help me, you left your poor sister quite ignorant of your destination, at the moment of parting, Michael, as well as quite destitute, and oh! inexpressibly miserable!

And now, Michael, do you think I act unworthily or sinfully in breaking through the oath I made? Was it not a conditional oath? To be held sacred only in order to afford opportunities for doing good to you, and to *him*, who now can never, never be served by mortal friend, or injured by mortal enemy! And they told me, assured me, that only a few weeks would bring every thing to a happy ending, and leave me free to resume full confidence with my family; and now, months, months, months have passed away, and where is the happy ending? oh, my father, where! oh, my poor brother, where! oh, my unborn babe, where! where!

And, though I have not uttered, and will not utter, a harsh word of my husband, what can I think but that he has deserted me! Even supposing that George Allen did not deal fairly with the certificates, surely the same hands which gave them could give others like them, and so he would be proved entitled to his liberty of acting for himself; and, if he still loved me, long, long ago I must have seen him at my side. His sister Ellen, too; *her* cruel neglect of me proves *his*, they were such confidants together. A hundred times, before we met in London, and there also, he has assured me she would be my greatest friend; that

she loved me as a very sister, indeed; was most anxious to become quite known to me; and would even brave her father's anger to come to me, and stay with me, and help to make me happy. But I have not even heard from *her* either; and, notwithstanding all her eagerness to be friends with me, I never in my life saw her but once, and then in your presence, Michael, and by mere chance: the morning that she came to you to beseech you not to fight a duel with her father, and when you were so uneasy to know the words she whispered in my ear; which, though I then held from you, I now give you—"I am Augustus's sister Ellen, of whom he has spoken to you, and your brother wants to destroy us all, by challenging Lord Lintern."

I have done my task, Michael. Oh, why, why, I ask myself again, did I delay it till now? why, at least, after that last terrific day at Lord Lintern's, did I not immediately tell you every thing? More than all, how could I be so irresolute, so cruel to you, so criminal, as to let you go away from me without a full explanation? You repulsed, by anticipation, to be sure, any confidence from me; but that was nothing, ought to have been nothing. Oh, dearest brother, account for my inconsistency, if you can, by recollecting my anguish, my stupefaction, my despair, and yet, amid all, a lurking hope that my word to Lord Lintern would reach Augustus, and that, I don't know how, but somehow, I should at last see him, and have his permission to avow myself his wife.

Come back to me, Michael! Michael, my brother, come back to me! my only brother, and my only friend! come back to me, or I shall utterly perish! The woman with whom you have left me denies that you gave her any thing for me; and while I write this, Michael, I shiver with cold, for I have no fire; and I am hungry, for I have no bread! oh, come! come! come! Even my little unborn one asks you to come: I *feel* it, beneath my bosom, asking you! And oh! there are other odious and frightful features of my present lot. Come!

BESSY ALLEN.

Upon a bleak winter's day, poorly and thinly clad for any weather, Bessy stole down stairs, for the first time since she had come to the house, and out into the street, in order to put her parcel in the post-office with her own hand. She did not like to trust it to her landlady's care. And, since she had begun to write it, things had happened which warranted her caution.

The invitations to take "a morsel of supper," in the parlour, were renewed to Bessy, after the first night. She was consistent in declining them. The boisterous mirth below stairs, particularly of evenings, nay, late after bed-time, would have deterred her if she had no other insurmountable objections. Her landlady grew offended and short-sentenced, and sharp-worded in consequence; and hinted that she had no more money to purchase a fresh stock of bread, butter, tea, and sugar, upon which fare, solely, Bessy had now lived four days.

Upon the sixth evening, soon after Bessy had sent off her packet, the comely-faced and amiably-mannered mistress of the house knocked for admission at Bessy's bolted door, and her voice was unusually sweet. Bessy got up from her writing, and opened it.

"My brother, the major, *will* come and ask you if he can do any thing for you, my dear," said the woman; and to Bessy's consternation, an old gentleman certainly entered the room, while his sister went down stairs.

The destitute girl, at first so much terrified that she could scarce stand, felt some re-assurance from a glance at her visiter. She thought she had never seen a more bland and benevolent as well as venerable countenance. Almost snow-white hairs shaded his polished temples; his mild, weak blue eyes beamed kindly upon her, and his parted lips, discovering the loss of nearly all his teeth, smiled at her, much as her own dear father used to do.

With many bows, he followed her across the room, after first saving her the inconvenience of shutting the door; and then handing her a chair, and asking permission to be seated

himself, began to say that he hoped she would pardon his intrusion, in consideration of the motive for it, which, indeed, was great interest in her present seemingly friendless situation (Bessy burst into tears of agony and gratitude); and he went on to let her know that his sister, the good lady of the house, had hinted to him, very delicately, Bessy's disappointment in a remittance; and that he just thought he would step up stairs, from the parlour, to assure her that she need not give herself the least trouble on that head; for, as long as he lived, and had the means, no young lady, like her, so very young, and so very charming, should want money.

"And so, my dear," he continued, taking out his purse, and drawing his chair to the table — which movement also brought him nearer to Bessy — "there, and there, my dear," — he put down two sovereigns very distinctly, one after the other; "and there," another, as he turned and smiled more graciously than ever; "and there, and there, my pretty little charmer:" and now the sovereigns were all in a row.

Bessy, without at first suspecting any thing else, did not like the ostentation of the benevolent old major, and so she sat still, and neither took the sovereigns, nor returned thanks for them.

"And now, my dear," he resumed, drawing still closer to her, "do I deserve no little compliment?"

He accompanied these words with an action, or rather an attempted action, at which Bessy sprang up, and ran to the door. The polite old philanthropist had locked it, as well as saved her the trouble of shutting it. Her voice was an uninterrupted hysteric of screaming. She ran to a window, and cried out to the people in the street; and this saved her from the momentary inconvenience of the hoary villain's presence. But it also brought up his "sister," who, her exquisite mask torn off, now showed herself to her poor lodger in the true nature of the monster she was. Revenge she vowed and swore. Bessy offered to escape from the house: no! not till she had paid for her lodging! and her own door was now locked on the outside, and she was left alone.

Lord Lintern and his elder son took their journey together. At within about thirty miles of their destination, while they travelled at the utmost speed, the postilions stopped on the outskirts of a small village, to water the horses. Their attention became directed to a crowd which surrounded the door of a very wretched house, contrived against the fence to one side of the road. Words of pity at one moment, of indignation at another, escaped men and women, old and young. Augustus particularly felt interested. He called out of the carriage window, asking what was the matter. The crowd divided before the door, as a woman answered, "I will tell you, gentlemen," and she came to the carriage, weeping and sobbing, and her story was this: —

"A poor soul, with child, had been brought through the village to the next town, the day before, by the parish officers of another town, a great way off, where she had been living, destitute, only a few days." The officers took her at her word that the town at present near at hand was in her parish, though now it was thought she gave them incorrect information, to avoid the shame of appearing among her friends: — "Well, gentlemen," continued the woman, "the parish folk of our town wouldn't have nothing at all to do with her, but sent her back to the place she came from, quite sure, they said, that she had a settlement there; and the parish folk there turned her off a second time; and she has been forwarded from parish to parish, till we saw her passing by to-day again, a-foot, and almost barefoot, and quite spent, and tottering, till she fell, just there, at the door of my poor house; and my husband and I, though we are paupers ourselves, were forced to lift her up — we couldn't look at her, and help doing it; and see — there she lies, inside the threshold more dead than alive, I fear."

During this recital, the father and the son interchanged fearful looks of misgiving.

"You deserve something for having kept a heart in spite of the parish," said Augustus, giving the woman money. "And now let *me* see this poor girl."

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"Augustus, stop a moment," whispered Lord Lintern —"and do not look so doubtingly at me, but see if I shall not arrange it better, supposing, what I know you fear. She shall enter the carriage, along with us, this moment, whoever she is. *If* she be the person we are travelling to seek, the precaution will save us the public disgrace of recognising her at present."

To this characteristic speech of his father — improved and corrected man as he was — Augustus impatiently submitted. The wanderer was lifted, by the people, a dead weight into the carriage.

Though recognised at once, she saw no one, was conscious of nothing; and days of insensibility, produced by fever, succeeded. But when she could take notice of her situation, and of the first face she saw at her bedside, poor Bessy said to herself, — "Ah, I dream, I dream, asleep yet on my straw, and in my rags, and cold and hungry." But she soon knew that her luxurious and finely-dressed bed, and the happy warmth of her limbs, her sense of relief, and the smell of perfumes, were real; and that she was indeed watched by her gentle young sister-in-law.

Nor was it long till other faces smiled successively at her bedside; her brother's; her husband's; nay, and her husband's father's; and it pleased Him who "tempers the winds of heaven to the shorn lamb" to ordain that all the attentions of parish law did not succeed in preventing poor Bessy from being, in good time, a happy, a delighted, and, on all hands, a flattered mother.

As to some other persons — directly upon the marriage of Michael Mutford and Lady Ellen Allen we will send a circular intimating the event to our readers: Richard Graves wishes to give his friend away, thinking it his right, he says, to get rid of Michael, after all the trouble he has cost him, by the unquestionable proof of the agency of his own hand.

THE END.

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